

Part of blast-damaged factory to stay closed.(News Business).*Globe & Mail (Toronto, Canada)* (July 28, 1988): pA13. (639 words)

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Byline: LILA SARICK

BY LILA SARICK The Globe and Mail A division of an adhesives factory in Toronto's west end that was damaged by an explosion two weeks ago will not reopen.

Nacan Products Ltd. will move the part of its manufacturing process that used flammable raw materials to other plants in North America, John Shepherd, vice-president of engineering, said in an interview yesterday.

The company, which manufactures starches, adhesives and plastic products, will continue to mix non-flammable, water-based chemicals at the Wallace Avenue site, Mr. Shepherd said.

The Junction Triangle neighborhood, a mixed residential and industrial area near Bloor and Dundas streets, was rocked by an explosion at the plant July 12, which sent a 30-metre high cloud of toxic smoke into the air and left a gaping hole in the plant. Thirteen people were treated in hospital after being exposed to the fumes.

"I feel like we have accomplished a major victory," Virginia Novak- Jendruszka, spokesman for the Citizens Watchdog Committee against Pollution, said in an interview.

"But I don't want the other industries (in the area) to think the pressure is off. Maybe other industries will follow suit."

The explosion occurred when a valve was left open on a tank inside the plant, allowing two chemicals to mix, Mr. Shepherd said. Damage to the plant was estimated at more than \$200,000.

Inspectors with the provincial Ministry of the Environment are still investigating the incident, said John Mills, a district officer with the ministry.

Nacan had been planning to shift some of its operations to more modern factories, but not until next year, Mr. Shepherd said.

The Wallace Avenue plant was built in 1929, he said. A newspaper advertisement from that year emphasized the advantages of the Junction neighborhood where residents could walk to jobs in nearby factories, he said.

The 10 employees working in the closed portion of the plant will be moved to other jobs

at the Wallace Avenue site or to Nacan's Keele Street plant.

In the wake of the explosion, Toronto City Council passed motions asking for reports on the possibility of moving factories that use hazardous materials out of residential areas.

Junction residents have been pressing Nacan to close its operations for about five years, Mr. Shepherd said.

The Junction Triangle is home to about 6,000 people and 20 factories, according to the last census.

One of the most serious incidents in the area occurred in 1982 when Nacan spilled 3,700 litres of chemicals into city sewers, closing three schools and sending five people to hospital.

The company failed to report the accident to the Environment Ministry and was fined \$17,000 for the spill.

A leak of nitric acid fumes into the neighborhood in 1984 sent three fire fighters to hospital.

Residents had threatened to boycott Nacan products if the Government did not close the factory until it was certified as safe and will continue to keep a close eye on the plant, Ms Novak-Jendruszka said.

"If they can properly train their personnel . . . and keep a close eye on their procedures, then I guess I can live with them. But one slip-up and they're finished," she said.

Derwyn Shea, Toronto councillor for the Junction Triangle area, said he was gratified by Nacan's decision to move part of its operations, but said that in the long run, the city and the province must help aging factories relocate to industrial parks in Toronto.

Junction Triangle residents have complained about the health hazards posed by their industrial neighbors for more than a decade.

About eight heavy industries using volatile chemicals still operate in the area, Ms Novak-Jendruszka said. Her committee wants them replaced by light manufacturing plants.

"A lot of people feel . . . you may go to work one morning, but who knows what you'll come home to," she said.

**Source Citation:** "Part of blast-damaged factory to stay closed.(News Business)." Globe & Mail (Toronto, Canada) (July 28, 1988): A13. CPI.Q (Canadian Periodicals). Gale. TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARIES (CELPLO). 25 Apr. 2008  
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**Gale Document Number:**A165003479

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