

## Chevron says it will upgrade pipes

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[www.sfgate.com/default/article/Chevron-says-it-will-upgrade-pipes-4018293.php](http://www.sfgate.com/default/article/Chevron-says-it-will-upgrade-pipes-4018293.php)

Chevron says it will use corrosion-resistant piping as it rebuilds sections of its Richmond refinery damaged in an August fire it says was caused by undetected corrosion on a vulnerable pipe.

The fire occurred when a crack caused by corrosion developed in carbon steel piping that drew oil away from the refinery's crude-oil processing unit. Federal investigators say the company had opted not to replace piping it knew could be vulnerable and neglected to inspect the section of pipe that failed.

In a letter sent Wednesday to the city of Richmond and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, Nigel Hearne, the refinery's general manager, announced that repairs and replacements at the damaged unit that are at risk from sulfur-related corrosion will be replaced by more-resistant chrome alloy piping. Hearne said the company is inspecting and may replace other pipes at the refinery if they are at risk. The work is expected to be completed by March.

"We look forward to returning the refinery to full production," Hearne said.

Greg Karras, a senior scientist with Communities for Better Environment, said the company's actions don't go far enough. He said that even the chrome alloy Chevron has pledged to install has been vulnerable to sulfur corrosion.

Chevron's own scientists have recommended materials that are more resistant to corrosion than what the company now says it will use, he said.

"They are cutting corners on the rebuild," Karras said, calling for more government oversight of the company's decision-making. "I want to see a government expert review of this before it gets approved."

Mike Smith, a safety representative with the United Steelworkers Union, said workers are tracking the company's efforts at making the refinery safe.

"Our No. 1 focus is the safety of the workers, the environment and the community," he said. "We will be vocal if we see anything that is going in the wrong direction."

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