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Atchison Area Explosion Victims Improving

(KAIR/AP)--The two people most seriously injured in a rail car explosion in Atchison County are improving at a Kansas hospital.

The men were among at least seven people hurt when the rail car exploded Thursday afternoon at GBW Rail Services west of Atchison. A spokesman for the University of Kansas Hospital said early Friday that the men's condition had been upgraded to fair.

No one was killed. The Kansas State Fire Marshal's Office is investigating the cause of the accident.

Atchison County Sheriff Jack Laurie says the explosion occurred just after 2:00 when the rail car, which contained fuel, exploded inside a building with 16-17 employees present. All were accounted for after the explosion. A total of six employees were transported to area hospitals with various injuries, including burns and smoke inhalation. All other employees were screened by EMS and released.

GBW official Jack Isselman said the explosion happened in an area where rail car surfaces are prepared for painting. He adds that the company sends their thoughts and prayers to those injured, and have sent several senior managers to the location to help assess the situation.

The Atchison facility refurbishes and repairs freight rail cars, and employs 54 people.

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