

Airport fuel truck crashes into fence; causes jet fuel leak

By **Jim Herr** - March 16, 2018



An airport fuel truck crashed into a chain link fence causing a jet fuel leak on March 16th. (Jim Herr/Cheektowaga Chronicle)

CHEEKTOWAGA – A Prior Aviation fuel truck servicing the Buffalo Niagara International Airport slid off an airport perimeter road and crashed into a fence causing a jet fuel leak Friday morning.

NFTA authorities say the fuel truck was carrying 4,800 gallons of Jet A fuel – a kerosine like fuel between diesel and gasoline – when it crashed into a chain-link fence just before 5:30 am on airport property near Genesee Street and Holtz Road.

“I believe its safer than regular gasoline,” said Buffalo Airport Fire Department Chief William Major. “The flashpoint on it is higher so once it starts burning its high heat and it will burn fast but it’s going to take more to get it going than just regular gasoline.”

It was being carried to the main terminal from the airport’s fuel farm by [Prior Aviation](#). The fixed base operator on the north end of the airport property is contracted out by the airport to provide services like de-icing and refueling.

2,000 gallons of fuel spilled onto the ground before the leak could be stopped. Firefighters were able to offload 2,800 gallons into another fuel truck.

The NFTA Police Department says an officer is investigating the cause of the crash and more will be released later Friday, however, they do say winter conditions were observed at the time of the crash and they could be a factor. Video surveillance of the crash is also being reviewed.

An airport fuel truck crashed causing a jet fuel leak on March 16th. (Jim Herr/Cheektowaga Chronicle)

Kyle Alexander, a Lyft driver tells Cheektowaga Chronicle he was waiting in the Noco parking lot across the street for a customer and witnessed the crash. "I saw this gas truck come around the corner and he just kept sliding, sliding, sliding and hit the fence."

What caused the fuel leak is also under investigation. "No tank got pierced, I can tell you that," said Mr. Major. "There was a pipe that was cracked and we're investigating on how that occurred, but the tank itself did not get pierced."

Of the 2,000 gallons that spilled out, an unknown amount of it ended up in the airport's stormwater sewer system despite a dyking operation by firefighters. NFTA Environmental Engineer Brian McDonald says that fuel would be contained or treated on site.

"That system is designed to transfer the water to our storm system on our side. It's quite extensive throughout the property and there are numerous oil-water separators. In terms of the volume that got into our stormwater system, that's still under investigation," said Mr. McDonald.

Other remedial actions will be taken by the NFTA to clean up the contaminated soil at the crash site.

The Buffalo Airport Fire Department called for help from Cheektowaga's U-Crest Fire Department, the town's Emergency Coordinator, the Buffalo Fire Department Hazardous Materials Team, the DEC, and New York State Emergency Management.

Hy-View firefighters were requested to cover calls at the airport and were stationed at the airport's fire station.

Traffic to Genesee Street westbound and Holtz Road was shut down while crews mitigated the incident. Cheektowaga Police assisted NFTA Police with traffic control.

Airport flight operations were not impacted.