

## Explosions deliberately set to control fiery derailment

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A fireball shot into the sky and a boom resounded Friday from the site of a train derailment in northwestern New Brunswick as a controlled explosion was carried out to blast holes in three tanker cars carrying liquefied petroleum gas.

Black smoke billowed from the wreckage site after crews detonated explosive charges placed on the hulls of the cars to allow vapour and gas to burn off in a wooded area.

"Indications are that it proceeded as designed, but that is based on a helicopter inspection," CN spokesman Jim Feeny said after the explosion, carried out by the rail company and a crew from Louisiana with expertise in cleaning up derailed tankers.

The procedure, known as a vent and burn, was used on two tanker cars carrying liquefied petroleum gas that were burning before the explosion and a third one with the gas in it that was not on fire.

Feeny said crews have to wait for the site to cool off before checking to determine whether all the liquefied petroleum gas was burned off. He said the intent behind the explosion was to allow crews to move cars safely. The same type of explosion was used following a CN train derailment in October in Gainford, Alta.

Some tanker cars that derailed have been burning since Tuesday night in Wapske, near Plaster Rock.

An evacuation of the area has affected about 150 people since the derailment of 19 rail cars in the 122-car train, and there is no word on when they might be allowed to return to their homes. Some have been allowed temporary visits.