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Michigan residents evacuated after CN train car with hydrochloric acid overturns

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VERNON TOWNSHIP, Mich. - Dozens of residents were evacuated after a CN Rail freight train derailed in Michigan Thursday and started leaking hydrochloric acid.

CN spokesman Patrick Waldron says 11 cars derailed in Shiawassee County around 5:30 p.m., and that three fell on their sides, including a tanker car that started leaking hydrochloric acid.

"We do have environmental and dangerous goods officers that have responded to the scene to do their work in stopping that leak and containing it," said Waldron.

He added that a second tanker car also sprang a leak, but said it was quickly contained.

There was no word early Friday morning on how much toxic material had spilled, or whether there was any threat to the environment.

No injuries were reported from the accident, which occurred in a lightly populated rural area about 32 kilometres from Flint.

But Durand fire chief Richard Rinker said 25 to 40 people living within one and a half kilometres of the site were evacuated as a precautionary measure.

Waldron said it was too early to speculate on the cause of the derailment.

"Right now the focus is on the response to this incident and once the dangerous goods situation is resolved to move into a full investigation of what happened."

The CN freight had been headed east from Battle Creek to Flat Rock, Mich. just outside of Detroit when it ran off the tracks.

Crews were working through the night to clean up the derailment and get the route reopened to train traffic.

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