

COVID-19 halts Nova projects in Canada

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Nova Chemicals Corp.

Nova Chemicals has halted construction at a polyethylene and cracker expansion project in Sarnia, Ontario, along with work at a Joffre, Alberta, site.

The COVID-19 outbreak has led Nova Chemicals Corp. to pause construction work at two plastics and petrochemicals sites in Canada.

In a news release, officials with Nova in Calgary, Alberta, said that the firm is adjusting construction work on its new polyethylene resin unit and petrochemical cracker expansion projects in Sarnia, Ontario.

Those moves are being made "to temporarily focus on only the most critical work" and will result in a reduction of approximately 90 percent of our total construction workforce, they added.

"It is too early to say what impact COVID-19 will have on our overall construction schedule, and a phased ramp-up will be considered at the appropriate time to allow for the safe completion of construction activities," officials said.

In Joffre, Alberta, commissioning and construction on Nova's furnace refurbishment project have been paused. "Commissioning work will resume once we feel confident that the risk of exposure has diminished," officials said. Nova produces both PE and ethylene in Joffre.

"The health and safety of our employees, contractors and community remains a top priority for Nova Chemicals as we navigate the COVID-19 pandemic," they added. "The decisions we've made to pause construction activity will allow us to keep worker safety and well-being at the forefront while continuing to progress our business-critical construction projects."

All other Nova manufacturing sites remain operational and there are currently no impacts to the firm's supply chain or ability to deliver products timely.

"The U.S./Canada border has closed to nonessential traffic, but we do not anticipate any issues as trade is considered essential and supply chains between the two countries remain open," officials said.

Like many plastics and chemicals firms, Nova also has eliminated business travel and has all non-site-critical staff now working from home.

Nova is a major North American supplier of PE, ethylene and specialty styrenics. The firm employs almost 3,000 worldwide and has annual sales of \$3.6 billion.