

Saskatchewan Mine Disaster Averted

Written by

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CBC News - About 70 workers were trapped at the operation near Esterhazy, about 210 kilometres northeast of Regina, after the fire broke out almost a kilometre underground at about 3 a.m. on Sunday.

www.cbc.ca

[Miners found safe in Esterhazy-area mine](#)

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CBC News

Rescue crews have confirmed the safety of all 70 miners who have been trapped for more than 18 hours by a fire in a potash mine in southeastern Saskatchewan.

Officials from Mosaic, the U.S.-based company that owns the mine, were quickly able to establish radio contact with about 40 of the workers. They were in two groups and had holed up in two sealed refuge rooms, which had internal supplies of enough oxygen to last at least 36 hours as well as water, food, beds and blankets.

The fate of 30 others remained uncertain until shortly before 9 p.m. Sunday, when a rescue team found them in another refuge room about 1.5 kilometres from the fire.

"They are all safe, they are all healthy," said Marshall Hamilton, a Mosaic spokesman.

Hamilton said the team of six rescuers entered the room and spoke with the miners to confirm they were all uninjured.

He said the rescue crew then resealed the room to protect the miners from toxic fumes and smoke that the fire was still spewing throughout the mine.

"The fire is still burning and the miners won't leave the mine until the fire is out," said CBC News

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reporter Briar Stewart, who was at the scene and listened to the news conference.

"They're hoping that the next rescue crew or maybe the crew after that will be able to put out the fire. But it will still be several hours before the miners are able to leave."

Six-person teams of rescue workers had been entering the mine in rotating shifts since about 5 a.m.

Hamilton said the source of the smoke had been pinned down, but said it was too early to speculate about the cause.