

Illinois Route 3 is Reopened, Little Italy Neighborhood Issued Warning, But Lifted

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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HARTFORD - Update: Illinois Route 3 has been reopened after a temporary closure from Illinois Route 143 to Hawthorne Avenue in Hartford Saturday morning. Also, Wood River Police Chief Brad Wells said as of 8:40 a.m. Saturday this update: "The Code Red Shelter in Place has been lifted for the Little Italy neighborhood. The notification is expired."

Wood River Police Chief Brad Wells announced around 7 a.m. Saturday as a precaution due to atmosphere changes at sunrise, a Code Red Shelter in Place was issued for the Little Italy neighborhood in Wood River, south of Illinois Route 143. Wells also said earlier Saturday morning: "Illinois Route 3 has been closed temporarily due to mitigation efforts on the railroad track."

"It is a possibility this same thing could happen tomorrow (Sunday)," Wells added of Route 3 closure and a Code Red to a neighborhood.

"As it happens we shut down Route 3 and issue a Code Red," he said. "Keep in mind this is very fluid."

Chief Wells said a Little League Parade and a Library Kickoff event were both supposed to take place in Wood River Saturday morning but had been postponed.

"The events in Wood River on Saturday were postponed as a precaution," he said. "There are no dangers in those areas downtown area, but they are within close proximity of where the sulfuric acid leak has occurred and felt prudent to postpone the events in case the wind might shift."

The train sulfuric acid leak incident started at 3 p.m. Wednesday and then continued overnight into Thursday. Fire agencies from Wood River, East Alton, Godfrey, Roxana, Rosewood Heights, Alton, Edwardsville, and Madison County HAZMAT team and Madison County Emergency Management Agency were all called to the scene at first but now agencies from across Illinois and Missouri are now on scene to help. The original incident happened on the railroad tracks behind Mike's Manufacturing off Illinois Route 3 and involved four train cars leaking sulfuric acid.

Norfolk Southern said four stationary rail cars containing sulfuric acid had become over-pressurized and were venting on Thursday. The cars were part of a group of five cars originally picked up from the Phillips 66 Refinery and staged while awaiting pick up by KCS Railroad. Norfolk Southern personnel, HAZMAT contractors, and local first responders have been on the scene assessing the situation, monitoring air quality, and will be there throughout the weekend and likely into next week.

[Chris Rhodes also contributed to this story.](#)