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## Cause of blast still unknown

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Investigators at the site of Sunday's explosion at a Toronto propane facility aren't yet close to figuring out what caused the blast, the Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal said Wednesday.

The OFM, one of six agencies investigating the blast site, only Wednesday began the phase of its investigation where it will approach the centre of the blast area, where the original explosion is thought to have occurred, said the OFM's Bryan Fischer.

"They've only just made their fire real entry to the scene," Mr. Fischer said. "Before we can even address the cause, we need to find out where the explosion originated."

Until now, they'd been carefully documenting evidence around the perimeter of the site, working their way inwards as is customary with such investigations.

"Typically what happens is you work from the area of least damage, and move your way into the area of greatest damage. In this case here, we're talking about that whole area being the greatest area of damage," Mr. Fischer said. "The fact that there were so many subsequent explosions is obviously complicating things for our people."

He said it was "absolutely" possible no cause will ever be determined.

The remains found on the site of the blast Tuesday still haven't been identified. Officials are investigating whether they are that of a missing worker, Parminda Saini.

In the investigation, the Toronto police and OFM are joined by the Technical Standards and Safety Association (because of the propane involvement), the coroner (because of the body found), the Ministry of Environment (because of the fallout, including the discovery of asbestos), and the Ministry of Labour (because of the presumed death of the worker).

As of Wednesday, 70 homes were still off-limits. Six are thought to be uninhabitable.

A news conference was called Wednesday to update the media on the investigation. Asbestos, which had been found Monday immediately near the blast site, was confirmed late Tuesday night in a park two blocks away, though media reports suggested parents noticed it in the area a day earlier. The city would only say that it confirmed the discovery in that park Tuesday night.

Councillor Maria Augimeri, a veteran politician who represents the affected area, attended the conference - her first appearance since Sunday's blast. She said she flew home from a vacation in Italy on the "first available flight," getting caught in layovers and delays, and Wednesday addressed reporters and the public looking fatigued and disoriented.

One of her constituents, Tony DiSanto, lashed out at her for her absence these past few days, and for scheduling a meeting in conflict with another the community had planned at the same time. She responded angrily, telling him to "shut up." The exchange played out in front of rolling TV cameras -- including a live broadcast -- and dozens of reporters and residents.

Afterwards, Mr. DiSanto spoke with reporters -- saying he "felt like slapping" Ms. Augimeri

after she told him to shut up -- before leaving the area. Ms. Augimeri, visibly shaking and bleary-eyed, stayed to talk with all of the residents and reporters who approached her.

Some residents were upset that emergency crews weren't updating the public in Italian, a major language in the community. Ms. Augimeri's office also communicates in Italian.

A daycare and day camp around nearby Ancaster Park, which had been open earlier this week, were closed Wednesday after the asbestos was discovered.

Dr. Don Pincin, an asbestos consultant hired by the city, said Wednesday while the children technically face a minute risk from their exposure, the "vast majority" of asbestos-related illness is caused by chronic, prolonged, and heavy exposure to it. He likened fears of asbestos-illness from Sunday's blast to the fear that one might develop skin cancer from just a few minutes outside in the sun.

"For a single fibre or a single exposure to cause asbestos [illnesses] is quite speculative, and really not provable," Dr. Pincin said.

There are no medical tests for short-term exposure, he added.

Dr. Barbara Yaffe, the acting medical officer of health in Toronto, urged people not to panic.

"If it were my child, I would not be worried because we know the exposure is exceedingly low," she said. "They don't need to go to the doctor."

Public Health staff will be available on a special phone hotline Thursday at 416-338-7600.