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TORONTO: PROPANE EXPLOSION: TRUCK ACCIDENT

## **Gas company also involved in 1997 evacuation**

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Yesterday was not the first time that an incident involving Sunrise Propane Industrial Gases led to an evacuation.

One of the company's trucks flipped over in 1997 while exiting Highway 401 at Kennedy Road. The truck was carrying about 31,000 litres of propane, leading police to evacuate 5,000 residents in nearby apartment buildings.

The truck driver, a 28-year-old man with only a couple of months experience, was charged with careless driving. The company was not deemed responsible for the rollover.

The company stores and sells propane on site. Toronto Fire Division Commander Bob O'Hallarn said a truck driver was in the facility just before the blast.

"He was filling up his truck and he saw either some smoke or some type of gas, and went to report that and left the area. As he was leaving the area, there was an explosion."

The company's website says it sells propane to residential, industrial and agriculture clients.

Sunrise Propane also provides safety training for propane and dangerous goods certificates.

The company issued a statement last night. "We pray that our employee . . . who is missing, is found alive and if so we urge him to contact the police," the statement said. "We regret the discomfort and inconvenience caused to all those who've been affected by this."

A train line runs through the area. Volatile chemicals are often transported by rail overnight as a safety precaution, University of Western Ontario lecturer Richard Hawrelak said.

It wasn't clear whether a propane car was involved in yesterday's explosions.