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Oil field blast kills one worker, injures another in New Mexico

By Reuters Staff

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(Reuters) - An explosion at an oil field in southeastern New Mexico killed one worker and seriously injured another while the men were installing a drilling pipe on Wednesday afternoon, the Lea County undersheriff said on Thursday.

The dead man was identified as James Rusty Harrison, who was in his early 40s. Co-worker Tyler Winter, in his mid-20s, suffered shrapnel wounds to his torso and right leg and was flown by helicopter to a hospital in Lubbock, Texas, about 150 miles to the northeast, authorities said.

The undersheriff, Tom Dunford, said no one else was hurt in the accident, which occurred while workers were loading oil field-related materials into perforated pipe that was being installed into the drilling line.

There was no fire following the blast, and the cause of the explosion was under investigation, the sheriff's office said.

It said the site belonged to Mesquite SWD, based in Carlsbad, New Mexico, which operates a number of wells in West Texas and southeastern New Mexico. The two victims of the blast were employees of a company called Warrior Wireline.

A separate explosion at a West Texas oil and gas field on Tuesday killed three people and injured one.

Reporting by Steve Gorman from Los Angeles; Editing by Sandra Maler

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