Showing Up When It Mattered Most

Story Overview

An upstream oil and gas operator faced a major operational emergency when a producing well in North Dakota caught fire, damaging multiple assets and creating immediate safety, environmental, and regulatory concerns. The company relied heavily on contractors and did not maintain a fully staffed health, safety, and environmental team, leaving leadership to navigate a rapidly evolving crisis with limited internal resources. When the CEO called IMA to report the incident, he wasn't looking for a traditional insurance conversation. He needed experienced support and guidance during an active emergency.

Challenge

At the time of the call, the well was still burning and the situation remained uncontrolled. The incident ultimately damaged additional wells, a drilling rig, a dozer, and tank battery infrastructure. The client also had to navigate environmental concerns, contractor accountability, regulatory reporting requirements, and an ongoing incident investigation. Without a dedicated health, safety, and environmental (HSE) team, company leadership needed immediate guidance to help manage both the emergency response and the decisions that would follow.

> IMA provided a boots-on-the-ground presence to help the client navigate a highly complex situation.

IMA's Strategy and Actions

IMA's Energy Risk Control team mobilized within hours to support the client by:

+ Connecting directly with the CEO and operations team shortly after the initial call and traveling to North Dakota to provide on-site assistance.
+ Supporting emergency response activities while the fire remained active and helping coordinate site response efforts.
+ Assisting with communications and reporting to state and environmental regulatory agencies, including the preparation of required twice-daily updates.
+ Helping gather information related to environmental impact assessments, response activities, and recovery timelines.
+ Supporting incident investigation efforts and helping the client evaluate potential contractor responsibilities.
+ Coordinating with IMA's claims, contract review, and client service teams to provide comprehensive support throughout the event.

Why It Worked

IMA's team brought firsthand operational experience to the situation. Unlike a traditional consulting approach, team members had previously worked on the client side of the energy industry and had managed similar incidents themselves. That practical perspective allowed them to quickly understand the pressures facing the client and provide actionable guidance during a rapidly evolving event.

The team's ability to respond immediately, including during the week of Christmas, demonstrated a level of commitment that extended beyond standard brokerage services. While the assigned adjuster never traveled to the site, IMA provided a boots-on-the-ground presence to help the client navigate a highly complex situation.

Key Takeaways

IMA approached the incident from an operator's perspective. Members of the Energy Risk Control team had firsthand experience managing similar events while working on the client side of the industry. That practical background allowed the team to quickly understand the operational challenges facing leadership and provide guidance that extended well beyond insurance. The team's ability to respond during the week of Christmas and provide on-site support in a complex environment reinforced the value of a crisis management approach rather than a traditional consulting model.

THE RESULT:

IMA provided immediate on-site support during an active well fire, helping the client manage emergency response activities, regulatory communications, investigation efforts, and contractor-related issues. The experience strengthened the client's confidence in IMA's capabilities, and the CEO later reconnected with the IMA team after moving to another organization, citing the value of the support received during the incident.