

Incident Bulletin

US Environmental Protection Agency
EPA Region 8 Response Unit

Big Seven Mine Abandoned Chemicals

Neihart, Cascade County, MT

Report as of 9/13/2017 8:00 PM MST

Overview: The Big Seven Mine is located within operable unit (OU) 2 of the Carpenter-Snow Creek National Priority List (NPL) Site in the upper drainage of the Snow Creek watershed in the Little Belt Mountains, approximately two miles northeast of Neihart in Cascade County, Montana. This former mining site contains the remains of sixteen man-made structures in various states of degradation. Two of these structures, the former mill building and the former chemical assay laboratory contain unlabeled chemical containers.

In the mill building seven metal containers have been found that contain suspected waste oils. Within the chemical assay laboratory 33 unlabeled glass and metal containers containing chemicals have been found. Seventeen of these containers contain chemicals that are either characteristically hazardous for corrosivity (D002) or are spent halogenated solvents (assumed F listed wastes) or both. Four additional amber jars in the chemical assay laboratory contain substances that have crystalized and based on the label remnants on two of these jars (i.e., ether) represent reactive hazards (D003). In addition, three abandoned electrical transformers have been found at the Site. Based on the age of the Site it is suspected that these transformers contain polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

EPA has deployed an On Scene Coordinator, Emergency Response and Removal Services (ERRS) crew and Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) technical support team to the Site on September 13, 2017. The goal of this effort will be to safely containerize the chemicals from the two structures and transport them off-site to an appropriate disposal facility. The transformers will be drained and also taken off-site for appropriate disposal. The four amber jars at the chemical assay laboratory are too unstable to remove from the Site and will be disposed of on-site through thermal detonation.

State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions: Malmstrom Airforce Base is providing an Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) team for on-site thermal detonation of the containers deemed too unstable for transportation for off-site disposal. Monarch and Neihart Volunteer Fire Departments will provide fire suppression support during this operation.

EPA Actions: EPA's Response Team initiated response activities on September 13, 2017, and will provide a more detailed Incident Briefing document on September 15, 2017.

Media Interest: Low.

For further information, please contact EPA Region 8's Phone Duty Officer at 303-312-6510 or visit response.epa.gov/BigSevenMineAbandonedChemicals. The OSC is Craig Myers and the PIO assigned to this incident is Katherine Jenkins, 303-312-6351.