

REMOVAL

Lewis Chemical Removal Site Hyde Park, MA

U.S. EPA | HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM AT EPA NEW ENGLAND

THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND REMOVAL PROGRAM

responds to chemical, biological and radiological releases and large-scale national emergencies, including homeland security incidents. EPA conducts short term cleanups in the removal program when necessary to protect human health and the environment by either funding response actions directly or overseeing and enforcing actions conducted by potentially responsible parties.



INTRODUCTION

The 0.9-acre Lewis Chemical Site is in a neighborhood with businesses and residential homes in Hyde Park, Massachusetts. The site has three parcels, two of which are owned by the City of Boston and the third is owned by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. The entire Site is next to the Neponset River. It is near the Fairmount Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority train station and railroad tracks.

BACKGROUND

Many different businesses operated at the City-owned properties in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Businesses that operated at the Fairmount Court property included a plumber, tailor, laundry, dressmaker, and barber. There were also residential houses and apartments. The larger parcel located at 12-24 Fairmount Court was occupied by the Royal Remedy Co. Laboratory, a mason and picture painting company, a quilted brush factory, mill stone manufacturing, a carpenter, dental tool manufacturing, a knitting business, and a chemical and dye company. From 1940 until the early 1960s, the Leather Manufacturing Co., Inc. operated on the property. Following leather manufacturing, the Lewis Chemical Corp. operated from 1963 to 1983. It collected, transported, stored, and processed hazardous wastes. In 1983, after an explosion and fire at the facility, Lewis Chemical's license to operate was revoked. After acquiring the two parcels through tax foreclosure in 2000, the City completed a full assessment at the site. After acquiring one parcel in 1990 and the second in 2001, both through tax foreclosure, the City completed a full assessment at the site. The state-owned parcel was never built on and is environmental preservation land. The Department of Conservation and Recreation manages the state-owned land.

In January of this year, EPA approved a \$3.9 million short-term cleanup plan, or removal action. EPA began the removal action in April and expects it to take

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about seven months. The goal is to remove the source of contamination by digging up and disposing of soil contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other hazardous substances.

For more information on these contaminants:

PCBs <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts17.pdf>

Tetrachloroethylene <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts18.pdf>

Trichloroethylene <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts19.pdf>

Lead <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts13.pdf>

CURRENT ACTIVITIES

People may see EPA and contractors on-site typically between 6:00 am and 4:30 pm, Mondays through Fridays. Digging has been taking place at the southwest section of the site. To control dust from going into the air, water has been sprayed on the dirt during digging and trucking. EPA is continuously monitoring the air during all activities to make sure contamination is not going into the air. No pollution from site activities has been detected. Before being trucked off-site, the excavated contaminated soil is piled and covered during non-working hours.

Informational signs about the cleanup have been posted. These signs are located on the fence near each entrance to the Fairmount Station and at the site's entrance gate.

NEXT STEPS/WHAT TO EXPECT

Digging of soil contaminated with PCBs and other contaminants will continue. Water will continue to be used to control dust from going into the air. Monitoring for contamination in the air will also continue. Next steps will include:

- treating and disposing of surface and groundwater collected in excavated areas, if needed;
- trucking and disposing of contaminated soil and other hazardous substances at EPA-approved facilities; and
- bringing in clean soil to backfill the excavated areas.

A traffic plan to truck off contaminated soil and to bring in clean soil was created. The plan and traffic routes were discussed with the Boston Police and Fire Department. Once trucking of the contaminated soil begins, a police officer will direct traffic at the intersection of Fairmount Court and Fairmount Avenue. An EPA contractor will also be present by the train station to direct traffic whenever a truck is moving past the station.

ALONG THE RIVER

EPA has different programs to determine if hazardous substances are present and if so, how to clean them up. EPA can clean up a site as a removal action site or as a site listed on EPA's Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). Removal actions are quick responses

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to immediate threats from hazardous substances to eliminate dangers to the public. Whereas NPL sites, because of the degree of contamination or size of the sites, take longer to investigate, create cleanup plans for, and clean up. There are several EPA sites along the Neponset River. The Lewis Chemical and Riverside Square PCB sites are removal sites, whereas the Lower Neponset River Superfund Site is an NPL site.

RIVERSIDE SQUARE PCB

This site is located along the northern bank of the Lower Neponset River within the Riverside Square area in Hyde Park. From the 1930s through the 1970s, several industries using PCBs operated in the Neponset River Basin, one of the most industrialized basins in the United States. In 1962 and 1964, to control flooding, the river was dredged by the Metropolitan District Commission, now a part of the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation. Dredging is the process of cleaning out the bed of the river by scooping out sediment (mud) and debris with a machine called a dredge. The dredged materials, or “spoils,” were placed in several areas along the banks of the river, essentially creating new land. The Riverside Square PCB site is one of those riverbank locations. In October 2022, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection asked EPA to do more sampling of the spoils at the Riverside Square PCB site. EPA is currently sampling to better understand where PCB contamination within the soil is and decide if the removal of any contaminated soil is needed.

LOWER NEPONSET RIVER

On March 16, 2022, this site was listed on the NPL for Superfund sites. The site begins where the Lower Neponset River and the Mother Brook, a tributary to the Neponset River, meet and extends downstream to the Walter Baker Chocolate Dam located in Dorchester/Milton. Based on initial studies, this portion of the river contains contaminated sediment with elevated levels of PCBs. Historically, there were many mills along the Lower Neponset River in the neighborhoods of Dorchester, Milton, Hyde Park, and Mattapan. Dams were used to generate power for grinding wheels and to later operate larger industrial mills. These mills and other industrial facilities in the area may have contributed to the river contamination.

In the spring of 2023, EPA began conducting a site investigation and sampling activities along the river and riverbanks. EPA will also be working with property owners along some areas of the river to request access to properties where sampling for further investigation can take place. Sampling of soil and sediment on these properties may take place later in the spring and summer of 2023. EPA will work directly with private property owners on schedules and sampling details.