



Reading Drum Emergency Response

Community Update | January 2024

Overview

The Lincoln Chemical Company in Reading, PA is a non-operational facility with numerous chemicals in containers stored throughout the building. These chemicals include flammables, combustibles, acids, basis, oxidizers, and peroxides. After fires that occurred on October 31 and November 2, 2023, the building is in a dilapidated state and has been half demolished. The area surrounding the site is zoned mixed industrial and residential.

The cleanup work includes counting, categorizing, and removing all the hazardous chemicals in the building. Removal of hazardous chemicals is expected to begin in spring 2024.

EPA's Objectives

- To protect human health and the environment on and near the site
- To determine what chemicals are on site and sort them so they can be properly disposed of
- To conduct air monitoring
- To ensure physical safety of local responders and all site-workers

What's been done so far?

Air Monitoring and Sampling:

- Air monitoring and sampling for volatile compounds is on-going. To date, the air monitoring results are below any levels of concern. There are no levels of any contaminants in the air that warrant immediate action to protect residents.

Assessment:

Inventory

- Every container is visually inspected on site. Containers are numbered and information about the container such as its volume capacity, whether it has a label and what that says are noted. Photos are also taken to show the condition of the container (is it old, new, punctured, dented, etc.).

Field Screening

- A sample of the substance inside the container is taken and analyzed at the mobile EPA lab on-site to test for its characteristics and determine what it is.



Photos taken of the fire and on-going emergency response work at the Reading Drum site.



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Stabilizing damaged chemical containers

- Containers that are in poor condition and are leaking must be stabilized by either emptying the contents to a new container or putting the damaged container inside another larger container.

Removal:

Containers prepared for shipment

- Containers that are damaged or unfit for shipping are placed in overpack drums. An overpack drum is a larger container that provides extra protection around a damaged or compromised container. Containers are then labeled.

Materials are moved from the basement to the central staging area

- Containers will be shipped off-site for proper disposal. Containers are disposed of at an approved disposal facility based on their contents.

What's Next?

All chemicals in the basement have been stabilized. Emergency operations at the site will be decreasing. The footprint where work is occurring on site will also be decreasing. EPA expects the road closures to soon end. Laurel Street reopened on Saturday, January 27, 2024. South 9th Street will reopen soon. There will be periodic traffic control during disposal operations this spring.

Reading Drum – Site Location Map



The Lincoln Chemical Company is located at 600 South 9th Street in the city of Reading, PA.

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