



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  
REGION 1  
5 POST OFFICE SQUARE – SUITE 100  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02109-3912

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** February 26, 2025

**SUBJ:** Request for a Removal Action at the Bradford Veneer and Panel Site,  
Bradford, Orange County, Vermont - **Action Memorandum**

**FROM:** Jacques Elias, On-Scene Coordinator  
Emergency Response and Removal Section II

**THRU:** Catherine Young, Acting Manager  
Emergency Response and Removal Section II  
  
Matthew Audet, Acting Branch Manager  
Emergency Planning and Response Branch

**TO:** Bryan Olson, Director  
  
Superfund and Emergency Management Division

**I. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Action Memorandum is to request and document approval of the proposed removal action at the Bradford Veneer and Panel Site (the Site), which is located 131 Mill Street, Bradford, Orange County, Vermont. Hazardous substances present in drums, pails, and other containers at the Site, if not addressed by implementing the response actions selected in this Action Memorandum, will continue to pose a threat to human health and the environment. There are no nationally significant or precedent-setting issues associated with this Site, and there has been no use of the On-Scene Coordinator's (OSC's) \$200,000 warrant authority.

**CERCLIS ID# :** VTN000153881  
**SITE ID# :** 01TQ  
**CATEGORY :** Time-Critical

## **A. Site Description**

### **1. Removal site evaluation**

The Bradford Veneer and Panel Company began operating in 1910 on the site property, which had historically been used for sawmills since 1774. In 1910, The company produced veneer, plywood, and other wood products, until late 2021 when it ceased operations.

A January 2024 Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment report conducted for the Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission identified over 200 containers that are present inside the building. The Phase 1 report concluded that the majority of the drums contain substances used in wood products production including urea-formaldehyde, liquid resin, epoxy adhesive, wood sealers, and wood stain. Several pieces of wood products machinery were observed inside the building including sanders, planers, saws, and presses. Occupancy by unhoused people appeared to be taking place and drug paraphernalia was present.

The State of Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VT DEC) conducted an inspection under the authority of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) on July 20, 2023 and increased the estimated number of containers to over 500, and potentially over 10,000 gallons of material. After the inspection and based on the volume of material VT DEC referred the site to EPA for a removal action.

EPA and VT DEC conducted a site walk on August 14, 2024 and observed the inventory of chemical containers in various conditions, including corroded, spilled, and bulging drums. The site is unsecured and there is evidence of trespassing. VT DEC noted the local fire chief has ordered first responders not to enter the building for safety concerns related to the facility's hazardous materials.

The building is in various states of disrepair. The second floor of the storage and woodworking area had visible holes in the flooring and was not entered. Two releases of container contents were observed during the site walk. In the main room, the release of a white glue-like substance from a large tote had an alkaline pH of 10. In the catwalk room, an overturned drum had spilled a white powdery substance. In a small room near the boiler, a drum next to an ash pile was observed and labeled corrosive; however, the substance within appeared to be oil and had a petroleum-like smell. This drum could not be tested for pH. Drums and small containers were noted throughout the building.

On September 10, 2024, EPA conducted representative sampling of the drums and containers. Sixteen drums were selected for sampling. Drum samples were collected and submitted to EPA's New England Regional Laboratory for analysis for volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and metals analyses; one duplicate sample was also collected.

## 2. Physical location

The property is located at 131 Mill Street, in Bradford, Vermont at 43° 98' 90.2" north latitude and 72 ° 13' 2.6" west longitude. The site is a single parcel, zoned as industrial mixed use. It is abutted by residential properties to the north, south and west and the Waits River to the east. A dam is located 700 feet downstream, and a utility substation owned by the Green Mountain Power Company is located across the river. The site is identified by the town of Bradford as Parcel Number 23-86-0073 and defined in a deed recorded by Bradford Town Clerk on Page 481 in Volume 79.

## 3. Site characteristics

The 1.47-acre site is the location of an unoccupied plywood, veneer, and furniture manufacturing facility. The site hazards, and potential exposure pathways affiliated with them, stem from releases from the unsecured containers of chemicals. Primary concerns are particulate matter and fumes from potential fires and spills that could lead to the river that abuts the back of the property.

There are approximately 1,208 people living within a one-mile radius. According to EPA's Geographic Information System Mapping Tool, the site is not within an identified Tribal Nation's interests. Although the site's structure is over 50 years old, a National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 Section 106 review is not triggered because the proposed removal action will not adversely affect it.

## 4. Release or threatened release into the environment of a hazardous substance, or pollutant or contaminant

VT DEC, during its site inspection on July 20, 2023, estimated over 500 containers on Site. During EPA's site inspection, approximately 150-200 drums and 50 other containers were seen throughout the building, some unmarked. EPA sampling efforts during its investigation identified the presence of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants as designated by Sections 101(14) and (33) of CERCLA, present in site drums. In addition, EPA documented the presence of RCRA ignitable characteristic hazardous waste (D001) as identified in 40 C.F.R. 261 Subpart C. The following list is not comprehensive.

Contaminant	Media	Designation Under RCRA or CERCLA
D001 Ignitable Hazardous Waste	Liquids/product (55-gal drums/containers)	RCRA Ignitable Hazardous Waste
2-Propanone (acetone)	Liquids/product (55-gal drums/containers)	Hazardous Substance
Toluene	Liquids/product (55-gal drums/containers)	Hazardous Substance
Ethylbenzene	Liquids/product (55-gal drums/containers)	Hazardous Substance
M/P Xylene	Liquids/product (55-gal drums/containers)	Pollutant or Contaminant

Ortho Xylene	Liquids/product (55-gal drums/containers)	Pollutant or Contaminant
N-Propylbenzene	Liquids/product (55-gal drums/containers)	Pollutant or Contaminant
1,3,5-Trimethylbenzene	Liquids/product (55-gal drums/containers)	Pollutant or Contaminant
1,2,4-Trimethylbenzene	Liquids/product (55-gal drums/containers)	Pollutant or Contaminant
Naphthalene	Liquids/product (55-gal drums/containers)	Hazardous Substance
bis(2-Ethylhexyl)phthalate	Liquids/product (55-gal drums/containers)	Hazardous Substance

### 5. NPL status

The site is not currently on the National Priorities List and has not received a Hazardous Ranking System rating.

### 6. Maps, pictures and other graphic representations



Figure 1: Site diagram.



**Figure 2:** 55-gallon drums and 5-gallon containers are staged on pallets and stacked in the loading dock area.



**Figure 3:** All the drums and containers are visibly corroding or leaking, and many are labeled as flammable.



**Figure 4:** View of leaking tote.

## **B. Other Actions to Date**

### **1. Previous actions**

There are no known previous response actions.

### **2. Current actions**

There are no known current actions being undertaken.

## **C. State and Local Authorities' Roles**

### **1. State and local actions to date**

Prior to the referral to EPA, the only other known action was the RCRA inspection by VT DEC conducted on July 20, 2024.

### **2. Potential for continued State/local response**

Due to the lack of State resources, VT DEC is not able to address the immediate threat presented from the site and has requested EPA support.

### III. THREATS TO PUBLIC HEALTH OR WELFARE OR THE ENVIRONMENT, AND STATUTORY AND REGULATORY AUTHORITIES

As described below, site conditions meet the general criteria for a removal action, as set forth in 40 C.F.R. §300.415(b)(1), in that “there is a threat to public health or welfare of the United States or the environment,” and in consideration of the factors set forth in 40 C.F.R. §300.415(b)(2) as described below.

*Actual or potential exposure to nearby human populations, animals, or the food chain from hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants; [§300.415(b)(2)(i)];*

Damaged and improperly stored drums are located throughout the site structure. Sampling efforts show the presence of at least 10 hazardous substances and pollutants or contaminants as defined by Section 101(14) of CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. §9601(14). Many of the samples and labels also showed the presence of RCRA Characteristic Waste Profiles (D001 ignitable hazardous wastes) as identified in 40 C.F.R. 261 Subpart C and CERCLA, 42 U.S.C. Section 9601(14). The site is located within a residential area, with evidence of trespassing inside the building. The Waits River, which receives drainage from the site, is a habitat for local birds and wildlife. A release would impact the local population and wildlife living near the property.

The presence of improperly stored ignitable wastes increases the threat of fire or explosion on the site. Table 2 shows some of the threats posed by the chemicals on the site as reported by the health and toxicological information from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry’s toxicological profiles.

Contaminate	Potential Health Risks
Toluene	Hearing loss, color vision loss, developmental delays
Benzene	Death, headaches, dizziness, vomiting, rapid heart rate, anemia, excessive bleeding
Naphthalene	Red blood cell damage, inflammation of the respiratory inflammation, lung damage, headaches, dizziness

*Hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants in drums, barrels, tanks, or other bulk storage containers, that may pose a threat of release [§300.415(b)(2)(iii)];*

Drums and containers are at risk of release due to the condition in which they are being stored due to a lack of heat, power, and security within the site. Several containers are

compromised and at increased risk of release. Given that the facility is no longer operational or maintained, the containers are unmanaged and at increased risk of release.

*Weather conditions that may cause hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants to migrate or be released [§300.415(b)(2)(v)];*

The building is currently unoccupied and the drums and containers within the building unmanaged. A weather incident that may cause further damage to the building will put the drums and containers at increased risk of release and create an imminent hazard to the public and the environment. The lack of power, which effects temperature control within the building, will create temperature extremes, which will adversely affect chemicals reactive to increases and decreases in temperature, causing additional drums and containers to become compromised due to repeated thermal stress.

*Threat of fire or explosion [§300.415(b)(2)(vi)];*

Many of the containers located at the site are labeled as flammable and are in various states of compromise. Sampling confirmed the presence of RCRA characteristic hazardous waste, including D001, D002 and D003. As the building is unoccupied and does not have heat and power, the potential for threat of fire or explosion is increased. The lack of power also impacts the proper functioning of the fire detection and suppression system. In the event of a catastrophic fire or explosion, a plume of airborne contaminants could impact nearby populations and the environment.

*The availability of other appropriate Federal or State response mechanisms to respond to the release [§300.415(b)(2)(vii)];*

There are no other appropriate federal or state response mechanisms available to complete an action on this site. VT DEC referred this site to EPA for assistance in removing the drums and containers.

*Other situations or factors that may pose threats to public health or welfare of the United States or the environment [§300.415(b)(2)(viii)].*

As Bradford Veneer & Panel Co., Inc. has ceased operations, its drums and containers located at the site are unmanaged and are at risk of release. As stated, exposure of the hazardous substances and hazardous wastes to the elements (i.e., no heat or power) may cause a release to the environment.

#### **IV. ENDANGERMENT DETERMINATION**

Actual or threatened releases of hazardous substances from this site may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health, or welfare, or the environment.

Actual or threatened releases of hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants from this site, if not addressed by implementing the response action selected in this Action Memorandum, may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to public health, welfare, or the environment. In accordance with OSWER Directive 9360.0-34 (August 19, 1993), an endangerment determination is made based on "appropriate Superfund policy or guidance, or on collaboration with a trained risk assessor," which is outlined and discussed in Section III above. Appropriate sources include, but are not limited to, relevant action level or clean-up standards, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry documents or personnel, or staff toxicologists.

#### **V. PROPOSED ACTIONS AND ESTIMATED COSTS**

##### **A. Proposed Actions**

##### **1. Proposed action description**

The proposed action will protect public health, welfare, and the environment. The goal of the removal action is to eliminate the direct contact threat and remove the source contamination by removing the drums and containers of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants. Once EPA has completed its work, the site will be returned to VT DEC for oversight.

Specific removal activities will include the following:

- Conducting a site walk with EPA contractors to determine appropriate equipment, personnel, and utilities required;
- Developing and implementing a health and safety plan;
- Preparing an air monitoring plan to ensure the safety of workers and the public and conducting air sampling, as necessary;
- Developing site-specific work plans;
- Mobilizing personnel and equipment;
- Delineating work zones and decontamination areas, as necessary;
- Installing measures to prevent access by the public to site contamination, as necessary;
- Clearing debris and vegetation as necessary to allow access to contamination and to clear areas for staging and decontaminating material;

- Performing work related to ensuring site safety including lighting, housekeeping, and structural shoring operations;
- Securing, segregating, and storing drums and containers;
- Consolidating drums and containers holding compatible materials;
- Treating hazardous materials on site;
- Planning for and executing proper sampling, characterizing, and disposing site related hazardous materials at an EPA approved off-site disposal facilities;
- Conducting additional sampling and site characterization to further delineate extent of contamination and/or assist in supporting response and disposal actions, as needed;
- Repairing response-related damage, as necessary; and
- Demobilizing personnel and equipment.

## 2. **Community relations**

EPA will remain involved with the local community during the removal action through press releases, fact sheets, and public meetings, as necessary. The OSC will receive assistance from an EPA Community Involvement Coordinator to assist with all public relations activities. EPA will work closely with the community, state, town, and local businesses.

## 3. **Contribution to remedial performance**

The cleanup proposed in this Action Memorandum is designed to mitigate the threats to human health and the environment posed by the site. The actions taken would be consistent with and will not impede any future responses.

## 4. **Applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements (ARARs)**

Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. 300.415(j), removal actions shall, to the extent practicable considering the exigencies of the situation, attain ARARs. EPA has been working in coordination with VTDEC to identify applicable state ARARs. Current identified ARARs include, but are not limited to, those listed below.

### **Federal ARARS:**

Clean Water Act, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), 40 C.F.R. Parts 122 – 125; 122.26: Establishes the specifications for discharging pollutants from any point source into the waters of the U.S. Also, includes storm water standards for construction sites over one acre. Removal activities will be managed to prevent stormwater discharge from the site.

Clean Water Act, 40 C.F.R. Sections 122.26(c)(ii)(C) and 122.44(k): NPDES regulations for storm water control and management will be met if the removal action triggers this ARAR.

Clean Water Act Federal Water Quality Criteria, Section 304(a), (40 C.F.R. 131.11):  
National Recommended Water Quality Criteria for chemicals for both the protection of human health and the protection of aquatic life; to be used as water quality monitoring standards for any work in or adjacent to wetlands or water bodies.

**State ARARs (Vermont):**

40 C.F.R. Parts 260-262 and 264 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Subtitle C-Hazardous Waste Identification and Listing Regulations; Generator and Handler Requirements, Closure and Post-Closure - Vermont has been delegated the authority to administer these RCRA standards through its state hazardous waste management regulations (Env. Prot. R. Ch. 7-501 *et seq.*, promulgated under 10 Vt Stat. Ann. § 6601 *et seq.*) Waste generated will be tested to determine whether it exceeds hazardous waste thresholds and, if so, the hazardous waste will be managed on-site and until such time as it is shipped to an EPA-approved off-site disposal location.

Vermont Hazardous Waste Regulations: (Env. Prot. R. Ch. 7-106; Env. Prot. R. Ch. 7-301 *et seq.*) These regulations are intended to protect public health and the environment by comprehensively regulating the generation, storage, collection, transport, treatment, disposal, use, reuse, and recycling of hazardous waste in Vermont.

Vermont National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Regulations: (Env. Prot. R. Ch. 13) regulates the discharge of stormwater into the waters of Vermont.

The OSC will coordinate with state officials to identify additional state ARARs, if any. In accordance with the National Contingency Plan and EPA Guidance Documents, the OSC will determine the applicability and practicability of complying with each ARAR that is identified in a timely manner.

**5. Project schedule**

Work is expected to commence in Winter 2025 and be completed by Summer 2025.

**B. Estimated Costs**

<b>COST CATEGORY</b>		<b>CEILING</b>
<i>REGIONAL REMOVAL ALLOWANCE COSTS:</i>		
ERRS Contractor		\$560,000.00
Interagency Agreement		\$ 0.00
<i>OTHER EXTRAMURAL COSTS NOT FUNDED FROM THE REGIONAL ALLOWANCE:</i>		
START Contractor		\$100,000.00
Extramural Subtotal		\$660,000.00
Extramural Contingency	20%	\$132,000.00
<b>TOTAL, REMOVAL ACTION CEILING</b>		<b>\$792,000.00</b>

**VI. EXPECTED CHANGE IN THE SITUATION SHOULD ACTION BE DELAYED OR NOT TAKEN**

Delayed action will increase public health risks due to the building being unoccupied and the drums and containers within being unmanaged, increasing the risk of release to the public and the environment.

**VII. OUTSTANDING POLICY ISSUES**

There are no precedent-setting policy issues associated with this site.

**VIII. ENFORCEMENT ... For Internal Distribution Only**

See attached Confidential Enforcement Strategy.

The total EPA costs for this removal action that will be eligible for cost recovery are estimated to be \$792,000 (extramural costs) + \$100,000 (EPA intramural costs) = \$892,000 X 1.3933 (regional indirect rate) = **\$1,242,823.60**<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup>Direct Costs include direct extramural costs \$792,000 and direct intramural costs \$100,000. Indirect costs are calculated by using regional indirect rate in effect at time cost estimate is prepared, and is expressed as a percentage of the 39.33% (effective January 11, 2024) x \$1,242,823.60, consistent with EPA’s full cost accounting methodology. These estimates do not include pre-judgment interest, do not take into account other enforcement costs, including Department of Justice costs, and may be adjusted during the course of a removal action. The estimates are for illustrative purposes only and their use is not intended to create any rights for responsible parties. Neither the lack of a total cost estimate nor deviation of actual total costs from this estimate will affect the United States’ right to cost recovery.

## IX. RECOMMENDATION

This decision document represents the selected removal action for the Bradford Veneer and Panel Site in Bradford, Vermont, developed in accordance with CERCLA, as amended, and is not inconsistent with the National Contingency Plan. The basis for this decision will be documented in the administrative record to be established for the site.

Conditions at the site meet the NCP Section 300.415 (b) (2) criteria for a removal action due to the following:

*Actual or potential exposure to nearby human populations, animals, or the food chain from hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants [§300.415(b)(2)(i)];*

*Hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants in drums, barrels, tanks, or other bulk storage containers, that may pose a threat of release [§300.415(b)(2)(iii)];*

*Weather conditions that may cause hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants to migrate or be released [§300.415(b)(2)(v)];*

*Threat of fire or explosion [§300.415(b)(2)(vi)];*

*The availability of other appropriate Federal or State response mechanisms to respond to the release [§300.415(b)(2)(vii)];*

*Other situations or factors that may pose threats to public health or welfare of the United States or the environment [§300.415(b)(2)(viii)].*

I recommend that you approve the proposed removal action. The total extramural removal action project ceiling if approved will be \$792,000.

APPROVAL: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_