

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region II
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Thursday, February 19, 2009

From: Paul L. Kahn, Michael Hoppe

To: Andrew Raddant, Department of Interior Lisa Levy, OSHA
William Molnar, Sandy Alexander Albert Greco, City of Clifton
Denise Zeno, USEPA Angela Carpenter, USEPA

Subject: Empty Shipping Containers Sent for Recycling

Abrachem Chemical
2 Peekay Drive, Clifton, NJ
Latitude: 40.8306000
Longitude: -74.1231000

POLREP No.:	20	Site #:	A212
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	072
Start Date:	1/2/2009	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	12/30/2008	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:	NJR000031831	Contract #	EP-W-04-055
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

At 1615 hours on 10/29/08 EPA received a notification from the NRC that a chemical release was occurring at Abrachem Chemical, a bulk chemical packaging facility that leased a building in Clifton, Passaic County, NJ. The NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection was on-scene and requested EPAs presence.

At 1730 hours OSC Ellen Banner and OSC Paul Kahn responded to the scene. The company was found to be storing drums and bulk containers of known and unknown chemicals in 17 56-foot long intermodal shipping carriers (ISCs), stacked 3 tiers high (approx. 35 feet). Only 5 of the ISCs could be opened, and inside those it was observed that drums and bulk containers were staged behind tiers of empty poly drums, giving the impression that the ISCs were used for new drum storage. EPA observed that in the one ISC where the release originated at least one drum was leaking its contents onto a wooden pallet; strong chemical odors emanated from the open door of the ISC and were also pervasive in the general area.

The Operator of Abrachem retained the services of a remediation company, and contractor personnel were advised to lay poly sheeting and begin removing and overpacking the leaking and unknown drums that were readily accessible. Work commenced almost immediately, but at 2100 hours was halted due to lack of adequate lighting and inability to physically access the majority of the drums through the narrow doorway.

The Operator of Abrachem and the Owner of the property was issued a Field Expedient Notice, and in response the Operator stated he would initiate a removal action. When his efforts to respond to the release, and threats of a release, proved to be inadequate EPA sought voluntary access to initiate a response action. This access was denied on two occasions. On 12/4/2008 EPA issued a Unilateral Administrative Order (UAO) for access. The Operator refused to comply with the UAO and EPA referred the matter to the Department of Justice for a legal remedy. On 1/8/2009 a federal Magistrate issued an access warrant to EPA to initiate a response action at the Site.

Current Activities

ERRS personnel continue to remove drums from the ISCs and overpack/stage according to the Site work plan. As of this date 12 shipping containers have been emptied and over 800 drums are staged inside the

main building. As the ISCs are emptied ERRS continues to identify additional drums of waste ortho-cresol and waste ortho-nitro-chlorobenzene which will be retrieved by their manufacturers. Over 425 samples have been haz-cated in the on-site lab.

Three pails, totaling 30 kg of sodamide (sodium amide), a water-reactive, flammable solid have been segregated and prepared for shipping for T & D on 2/24. Disposal will be at no cost to the government.

Approximately 2 tons (18 pallets) of flammable waste industrial mold release and related chemicals made by Specialty Products Company, formerly of Jersey City, have been removed from a box-trailer abandoned by Abrachem. Two drums of one chemical have a flash point of minus 7 degrees F! The company, now located in Corona CA, sent its business director to the Site, and for the past 3 days he has been segregating hundreds of containers into compatible groups. The company rep has completed the inventory and is in the process of arranging for T & D of the chemicals, at no cost to the government.

Only 5 full ISCs remain on the Site and 2 box-trailers. One box-trailer contains waste oil, drums of lube oil, and 6 car batteries; it was emptied on 2/20. The remaining full box-trailer contains off-spec paint. It will be inventoried and the local manufacturer contacted to retrieve his materials. As the ISCs are emptied they are removed by their owner, providing room to stage new drums and clearing the area for future soil sampling/excavation activities.

The owner of 200 empty poly drums, Arkema Chemical, will retrieve the drums which previously contained hydrated hydrazine. This will provide much-needed space to stage drums and will preclude the need for EPA to dispose of them.

Planned Removal Actions

Continue emptying ISCs and the remaining box trailer. Continue contacting chemical companies whose waste chemicals are discovered at the Site.

Next Steps

See above. In addition, two below-grade sumps that might be connected to an in-house floor drain system will be sampled for possible chemical contamination.

Key Issues

The primary key issue is health and safety concerns for the crew as more drums of dangerous or unknown chemicals are discovered.

Disposition of Wastes

Waste Stream	Quantity	Manifest #	Disposal Facility
Empty 300 lb. air cylinders.	2	n/a	Returned to Air Gas Corp. Oakland, NJ.

response.epa.gov/abrachemchemical