

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region II
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Friday, February 27, 2009
From: Paul L. Kahn, Michael Hoppe

To: Andrew Raddant, Department of Interior
William Molnar, Sandy Alexander
Denise Zeno, USEPA
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Subject: Abrachem Chemical
2 Peekay Drive, Clifton, NJ
Latitude: 40.8306000
Longitude: -74.1231000

POLREP No.:	25	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

Removal activities have resumed after this week's near miss with possible shock-sensitive peroxides and the break-in/burglary. ERRS has resumed removing containers of waste chemicals from the last five ISCs. On Friday 2/27, 32 120-lb. containers of BASF solidified vinyl resin were removed. Label information

reveals this material came from "West Germany". East and West Germany were united in 1989, so the chemicals are at least 20 years old.

Efforts to contact chemical companies to assume custody of their unusable waste-chemicals continues with great success. BASF (NJ) has agreed to pay for T & D of their drums of solidified resin plus numerous other 55-gallon drums of BASF waste chemicals at the Site. Neuville Hosiery (NC) has agreed to pay for T & D of a 320-gallon tote of an unknown chemical, and Decor Paints (NJ) has agreed to dispose of a box-trailer filled with hundreds of pails of non-usable paint. Final arrangements have been made for Specialty Chemical Products (CA) to pay for T & D of almost 2 tons of highly flammable, waste mold release products.

As a result of the burglary Wednesday night, ERRS has subcontracted with the City of Clifton to have armed, off-duty police officers perform after-hours security at the Site. This will last until other arrangements can be made with a private security guard company.

As of this date more than 500 samples have been haz-cated in the on-site lab. More than 1,000 drums and other containers have been removed from the ISCs, inventoried, and staged inside the premises for haz-cating; there are still 4 full ISCs that have to be emptied.

Haz-cating has been accelerated with the utilization of the EPA Haz-Cat ID unit which uses infra-red radiation to identify many unknowns and also to confirm the identity of the contents of containers that happen to match the label information.

Planned Removal Actions

Continue removing containers from the ISCs and process into the staging areas. Continue contacting chemical companies and arranging for T & D of their chemical wastes at no cost to the government.

Next Steps

See above.

Key Issues

See above.

response.epa.gov/abrachemchemical