

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Thursday, September 24, 2009

From: James Webster

To: jim mcguire, ERRB

Subject: Final Pollution Report
Pooler Elementary Mercury Spill
308 Holly Ave, Pooler, GA
Latitude: 32.1211200
Longitude: -81.2522880

POLREP No.:	3	Site #:	A4TE
Reporting Period:	12/18/2009	D.O. #:	0704-F4-0013
Start Date:	6/12/2008	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	6/11/2008	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:	12/18/2008	Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:	GAN000410218	Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

On June 11, 2008, Georgia Environmental Pooler Elementary (the Site) is located at 308 Holly Avenue, Pooler, Chatham County, Georgia. The geo-coordinates of the Site are 32° 07' 16" N Latitude and 81° 15' 8.66" W Longitude. The school is located within a residential neighborhood. Pooler is a bedroom community of Savannah, Georgia.

On June 11, 2008, EPA received a request from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) for air monitoring assistance at the Site. Reports indicated that on June 11, 2008, a student brought a container of mercury to the school. Mercury was reported to have been spilled into three or more rooms. Once discovered, school officials reportedly activated their emergency response plan. The container, still containing some mercury, was secured by school personnel. The local fire department and Chatham County Emergency Management Agency were notified. The Savannah Hazardous Material Team responded to the scene.

EPD reported that local hazmat recovered an unknown quantity of mercury from the floor of one classroom and from the gymnasium. Afterward, Savannah Hazmat was reported to have cleared the scene, and school activities resumed as usual. Though unknown to EPA at the time, school activities that took place after the school was cleared included a party/dance that was held in the gymnasium between the hours of approximately 3:30 and 5:00 PM. EPD requested EPA assistance at approximately 4:30 PM on June 11. EPA immediately responded.

The OSC and START contractors arrived at the Pooler Fire Department at approximately 11:00 PM on June 11, 2008 and met with representatives of the local police and fire departments, the Chatham County Emergency Management Agency (CEMA), and the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS). At approximately 12:00 AM on June 12, 2008, the OSC, START, and a member of the Pooler Fire Department entered the school building and performed a screening survey of airborne mercury within all wings of the school complex. The air monitoring survey was completed at approximately 1:30 AM on June 12, 2008. Immediately afterward, the OSC briefed local fire, police, CEMA, and SCCPSS on his findings that airborne mercury concentrations throughout most of the school exceeded the EPA action level of 3,000 ng/mg and that mercury levels in the gymnasium in particular exceeded 90,000 ng/m³ at the entrance. The OSC recommended that an emergency cleanup take place to mitigate the threats posed by spilled mercury and inquired whether the School System was in a position to perform the cleanup. At approximately 2:00 AM on June 12, 2008, the Savannah-Chatham County Public School System (SCCPSS) requested that EPA initiate an emergency cleanup. The OSC initiated the action as a fund-lead emergency removal.

Current Activities

Refer to the Final Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA)

Emergency Response Report for details of the removal action. The following is a summary of major activities carried out during the removal.

The EPA and START mobilized to the Site on June 11, 2008. ERRS contractors were mobilized on June 12, 2008. The response actions completed under the emergency removal involved four primary activities: 1) Pooler Elementary School assessment and cleanup; 2) offsite property assessment and cleanup, as necessary; 3) inventory and screening of personal items including vehicles, clothing, and school supplies; and 4) community involvement and outreach.

EPA ERRS contractor, Environmental Restoration LLC (ER) was mobilized to the at on June 12, 2008 to initiate cleanup activities at the school. Cleanup activities included removal of known or suspected contaminated items such as carpet, floormats, and various school supplies. These materials were staged outside and allowed to air in an attempt to drive off mercury vapors. Following cleaning of the floors of impacted areas of the school, portable heaters and fans were used to heat and vent contaminated rooms. In the case of Room 2 of Wing 1 of the school and the gymnasium, epoxy paint was applied to the floor to seal residual mercury in place. This action was taken because mercury levels had been lowered significantly through repeated cleaning and venting, and it was suspected that the existing flooring of the rooms covered older flooring containing asbestos materials which the OSC and school officials did not want to disturb. Following several phases of cleaning and venting, final clearance monitoring was completed on June 23, 2008.

On the second day of the response action, additional START and EPA resources were mobilized to the Site to assist in assessment of off-site properties, primarily residences, that may have been impacted by mercury being carried there on clothing or other personal items. A vehicle screening station was also setup for residents to bring in their vehicles for mercury monitoring. A total of 115 properties were assessed during the response and hundreds of personal items were collected for further monitoring and, as appropriate, disposal. All items collected were inventories, photographed, and documented via standardized documentation forms. Any item that could not be decontaminated sufficiently via heating and venting was retained for disposal. Items that could be decontaminated were returned to the owners. Approximately 7 tons of non-hazardous, mercury, contaminated waste was generated during the cleanup operation. During December, 2008, EPA, START, and ERRS returned to Pooler to distribute reimbursement checks to residents that had personal items retained by EPA and disposed of as mercury contaminated waste,

Two properties identified during during assessment activities were addressed as separate sites. The first property (Estates Way) was separated from the Pooler site because it was believed to be the source house and required extensive cleanup activities, including partial demolition of walls and disposal of appliances. The second property (Holly Street) was addressed as a separate site because it required more extensive cleanup activities than simple venting.

Planned Removal Actions

No further removal actions are planned for this site.

Estimated Costs *

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
Extramural Costs				
ERRS - Cleanup Contractor	\$125,000.00	\$90,000.00	\$35,000.00	28.00%
RST/START/G2	\$250,000.00	\$230,000.00	\$20,000.00	8.00%
Contingency	\$75,000.00	\$0.00	\$75,000.00	100.00%
Intramural Costs				
Total Site Costs	\$450,000.00	\$320,000.00	\$130,000.00	28.89%

* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

response.epa.gov/poolerelementaryhgspill

POLREP #3 Last Updated 12/22/2009