

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Wednesday, August 19, 2009

From: Rick Jardine

Subject: Interim Action

Brenau University Mercury Spill

615 Washington ST. SE, Gainesville, GA

Latitude: 34.3026389

Longitude: -83.8213889

POLREP No.:	3	Site #:	B422
Reporting Period:	Tuesday 08/18/2009	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	8/14/2009	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	8/14/2009	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

On or about Monday August 10th, the removal of a mercury-containing device along with worthless debris from a science lab at Brenau University (Brenau) resulted in a release of mercury to the floor and along the route to the garbage pen at the NW corner of the building. EQ conducted the initial stabilization of much of the visible mercury.

During the morning of Monday August 17, 2009, John Keller of Brenau contacted OSC Jardine requesting that EPA conduct the appropriate removal action at the Science Building at 615 Washington Street. Mr. Keller identified timeliness and availability of resources as essential to the response since classes are scheduled to begin Monday August 24th.

Current Activities

On Tuesday, EPA determined that tactics implemented Monday greatly reduced overall mercury vapor concentrations throughout the Science Building. However, local hot spots remained in the building and the Lab and 2nd story corridor continued to exhibit unacceptable mercury vapor concentrations. EPA employed more aggressive tactics including removing all carpet along the traffic pattern from lab to building exit, removing wooden built-in shelving, targeting hot spots along the tile floor for removal and merc vac, and washing the entire lab floor with a corrosive chemical agent. After appropriate contact time, EPA thoroughly rinsed the floor and collected the rinseate. EPA continued to apply heating and venting of the Lab (Room 22) and closet during 12-hour work day with unheated venting of the entire 2nd floor at night.

Outside, ER began merc vac operations on the path from the door to the garbage pen. Afterwards ER applied torch heat to those areas including surrounding cracked pavement.

ER also spotted a 20 cu yd rolloff box in the Brenau maintenance yard and staged all removal-derived waste in the rolloff.

Planned Removal Actions

On Wednesday EPA intends to recheck building air for status while focusing efforts outside in the parking lot. Any hot spots will be addressed with targeted technologies described above.

response.epa.gov/BrenauUniversityMercurySpill