

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
Cuming Corp Emergency Response - Removal Polrep  
Initial and Final Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region I

**Subject:** POLREP #1  
Initial and Final SITREP  
Cuming Corp Emergency Response  
  
Avon, MA  
Latitude: 42.1365254 Longitude: -71.0607185

**To:**  
**From:** Mia Pasquerella, OSC  
**Date:** 11/18/2009  
**Reporting Period:**

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

<b>Site Number:</b>	<b>Contract Number:</b>
<b>D.O. Number:</b>	<b>Action Memo Date:</b>
<b>Response Authority:</b> CERCLA	<b>Response Type:</b> Emergency
<b>Response Lead:</b> EPA	<b>Incident Category:</b> Removal Assessment
<b>NPL Status:</b> Non NPL	<b>Operable Unit:</b>
<b>Mobilization Date:</b> 11/18/2009	<b>Start Date:</b> 11/18/2009
<b>Demob Date:</b> 11/18/2009	<b>Completion Date:</b>
<b>CERCLIS ID:</b>	<b>RCRIS ID:</b>
<b>ERNS No.:</b>	<b>State Notification:</b> MA DEP notified and on-scene
<b>FPN#:</b>	<b>Reimbursable Account #:</b>

#### 1.1.1 Incident Category

Emergency Response

#### 1.1.2 Site Description

The site is an approximately 30,000 sq ft manufacturing facility that produces primarily a syntactic foam material. This type of foam is a composite consisting of hollow glass spheres within a plastic matrix which has many off-shore applications due to its properties. A number of chemicals and various epoxies are used in the manufacturing and refining process.

During the summer of 2008, Cuming Corporation changed some chemical ingredients and process conditions, and upgraded existing ovens to accommodate higher curing temperatures. In addition, some work areas were relocated. Within weeks of some of these changes, the company began receiving respiratory complaints. An environmental consulting company was hired to identify compounds that may be related to the complaints. A round of air sampling was conducted and recommendations were made to modify work conditions/controls and to more precisely determine the causes of the complaints. In January, 2009, a second round of sampling was conducted and more recommendations were discussed with the company. Cuming Corporation has also apparently been working with another consultant to upgrade and improve their ventilation systems.

##### 1.1.2.1 Location

This facility is located in an industrial/commercial area at 225 Bodwell Street in Avon, MA. The latitude and longitude is 42.1365 and -71.0607 respectively.

##### 1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

At the time that EPA responded to the scene, two employees were being treated at a nearby hospital for respiratory issues. The first employee who works in the 'grinding' shop had apparently inadvertently inhaled a type of fiberglass dust on 11/16/09 and after experiencing respiratory distress was sent to a nearby hospital. He was later released with no apparent diagnosis and was cleared to return to work. On 11/18/09, he reported in for his 7:00 AM shift but soon after was found to again be in respiratory distress and transported to the hospital. The second employee is a day shift supervisor and is not assigned to

work in one particular area of the plant. On the morning of 11/18/09, he reported not feeling well and experiencing respiratory issues. He was also sent to the local hospital.

### **1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results**

The EPA responder, EPAs Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) contractor, Weston Solutions, START personnel, and Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MA DEP) responder were accompanied through the facility to the 'grinding' shop where the manufactured foam items are sanded and where necessary epoxy 'patches' are applied for a smooth, finished product. A 1 liter SUMMA canister was used to collect a grab sample from the center of the room and later brought to the EPA Regional Laboratory for analysis. There was clearly a layer of dust throughout the room along with a pungent chemical odor. In the remainder of the facility, various totes of assorted chemicals were stored. Similar chemical odors were present in these areas as well.

Analysis of the air sample indicated a number of organic compounds, although none were at levels of concern.

## **2. Current Activities**

### **2.1 Operations Section**

#### **2.1.2 Response Actions to Date**

On the morning of November 18, 2009 EPA was notified by the National Response Center that the Avon, MA Fire Department had requested assistance from EPA at the Cuming Corporation. The FD requested assistance following two employees experiencing respiratory distress and a recent history of similar issues at the facility. The responding On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) along with two members of the EPA START contractor arrived at the facility at 11:00 AM and met with a responder from the MADEP. The group of responders then met with three representatives from Cuming Corp to discuss the current situation. Representatives of Cuming Corp stated that it was not clear if the two hospitalized employees had experienced similar symptoms or if they had been working in the same place in the same time frame. The first employee was assigned to work in the 'grinding' shop and had experienced health issues a few days prior to the incident. Approximately two days before, he had reported to the emergency room after accidentally inhaling fiberglass dust while at work. After being examined by medical professionals, he had been cleared to return to work. On the morning of November 18, he arrived for his 7:00 AM shift but was soon experiencing serious discomfort and was transported to the emergency room. The second employee affected at the incident was a day supervisor and was not assigned a permanent work location. It is not clear if he was in the grinding room on the morning of the 18th, but soon after arriving at work, he was experiencing respiratory discomfort and reported not feeling well. He did state to a company official and to hospital personnel that he did not feel it was work related.

Cuming Corp fully operational facility where many other employees have worked in the building as well as in and around the grinding shop area. There have been past respiratory complaints, but there did not appear to be any outstanding issues. EPA collected one grab air sample in the grinding room (SUMMA canister) to ensure that there were no levels of concern of volatile organics. The company has been working with consulting engineering companies to address the past complaints. The hired consultants have taken and evaluated air samples at the facility and have initiated the process of upgrading the ventilation systems.

### **2.2 Planning Section**

#### **2.2.1 Anticipated Activities**

The Removal Program does not anticipate any further involvement.

##### **2.2.1.2 Next Steps**

The responding OSC spoke with members of the EPA Office of Environmental Stewardship, Air Technical Unit. The OSC recommended that an inspection be conducted at the facility due to the ongoing respiratory issues, the chemical odors present in the facility, the amount of dust present in the grinding shop, and the potential lack or misuse of proper personal protective equipment (PPE). The OSC will also be speaking with an OSHA representative to present the facts to allow OSHA to make a determination if an inspection is warranted.

### **2.3 Logistics Section**

No information available at this time.

### **2.4 Finance Section**

No information available at this time.

### **2.5 Other Command Staff**

No information available at this time.

## **3. Participating Entities**

### **3.1 Unified Command**

#### **3.2 Cooperating Agencies**

EPA and the MA DEP responded to the incident and met with a Captain with the Avon Fire Department who was familiar with the facility.

**4. Personnel On Site**

No information available at this time.

**5. Definition of Terms**

No information available at this time.

**6. Additional sources of information**

No information available at this time.

**7. Situational Reference Materials**

No information available at this time.