

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
PGE Howard St. Substation Fire - Removal Polrep
Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region X

Subject: **POLREP #2**
Final Polrep
PGE Howard St. Substation Fire
932814
Newberg, OR
Latitude: 45.2977892 Longitude: -122.9751104

To: EPA HQ, EPA HQ (POLREP List)
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From: Daniel Heister, On-Scene Coordinator

Date: 2/19/2011

Reporting Period: 2/19-20/2011

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	932814	Contract Number:	
D.O. Number:		Action Memo Date:	
Response Authority:	CERCLA	Response Type:	Emergency
Response Lead:	EPA	Incident Category:	Removal Action
NPL Status:	Non NPL	Operable Unit:	
Mobilization Date:	2/19/2011	Start Date:	2/19/2011
Demob Date:	2/25/2011	Completion Date:	3/1/2011
CERCLIS ID:		RCRIS ID:	
ERNS No.:		State Notification:	Yes
FPN#:		Reimbursable Account #:	

1.1.1 Incident Category

Emergency Response

1.1.2 Site Description

Medium size electrical utility substation located across the street from city police and fire department.

1.1.2.1 Location

501 E 4th St.
Newberg, OR 97132

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

10 to 15 gallons of mineral oil with low levels (12 ppm) of PCB sprayed onto sidewalk and street over an area approximately 200 ft wide by 100 ft long. The oil was sprayed out when a liquid filled circuit breaker failed, exploded and burned. None of the material was allowed to reach surface water.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

At approximately 0700 hrs on 2/19/2011 a Portland General Electric (PGE) substation in Newberg, Oregon experienced an equipment fire. A 275 gallon oil filled circuit breaker failed, ignited and sprayed oil into the air. Approximately 10 to 15 gallons of oil left the confines of the substation and coated sidewalk, road, soil and vegetation (approximately 200' by 100'). The oil contained 12 ppm PCB. At the request of Oregon Dept. of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) FOSC Dan Heister went to the location to assess PGE's clean up effort. Heister arrived on site at approximately 1000 hrs and found PGE crews addressing the spill. Heister met with Tom Stodd of PGE Environmental affairs and toured the site.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

Mr. Stodd explained that the circuit breaker had failed, exploded and burned. The equipment held 275 gallons of mineral oil, 200 gallons of which either burned or went onto the ground. PGE sample results for this piece of equipment was 12 ppm PCB, classified as non-PCB equipment under TSCA. The vast majority of the oil spilled within the confines of the substation, but approximately 10 to 15 gallons left PGE property. The Newberg Fire Dept. (NFD) responded immediately (the fire station is located 200 feet from the substation) and secured the spill area (Howard St.) but put no water on the fire. 1600 PGE customers lost power for approximately one hour. The weather has been dry for the past several days and none of the material reached a nearby storm drain. Once the fire was out PGE and NFD delineated the area of contamination outside the substation and used barriers and tape to keep the public out.

The City Thrift store was the only building impacted as a 10' by 5' portion of a painted cinder block wall was sprayed with oil. PGE crews later cleaned the wall with a detergent solution. Several cars on the street got a light misting and owners were identified and given car wash vouchers to clean their cars. Mr. Heister directed Mr. Stodd to reconnoiter a four block area west of the spill to inspect for any other wind blown mist.

PGE crews spread sorbent material on the affected road and sidewalk, allowed it to stand for approximately an hour and then shoveled it up. A light detergent spray was then applied to these areas followed by another application of sorbent material (Sorb-all). This was allowed to stand for 30 minutes and then was shoveled up.

An excavator and roll off boxes were brought to the site and oiled soil was removed from around the substation and median strips. Excavation began mid afternoon and went until 2200 hrs on 2/19/2011. Soil samples were taken after excavation and are being analyzed.

Crews also cut and cleared affected vegetation. The substation is surrounded by shrubs and larger trees along the fence line and they served to knock much of the oil down when it was released. These shrubs were removed, but larger trees were not removed.

A City Park (Memorial Park) is located directly due south of the spill area. Mr. Heister directed Mr. Stodd to inspect the park for any signs of oil. This would include picnic tables, structures and play ground equipment. Mr. Heister and Mr. Stodd personally inspected the play ground equipment which was located 2.5 city blocks south of the substation and observed no oil, but agreed that a crew would wipe the equipment down and follow that with a wipe sample of the equipment. Mr Stodd would call me later in the evening to inform me that inspection of the park showed no evidence of oil.

Mr. Heister spoke with police and and NFD officials who were officed directly across Howard St. about the release. All were satisfied with the response. I left the site at 1800 hrs.

Sunday 2/20/2011

I returned to the site at 730 hrs to inspect the site. Excavation, hard surface cleaning and foliage removal had been completed. Tape and caution cones were placed around excavated median areas for the protection of the public until clean fill could be brought in after confirmation samples were received. I walked the park as a follow up to PGE's inspection and did not observe any signs of oil either on hard surfaces or in standing water in low points of the grass. I proceeded to the Police Dept. and asked permission to inspect their secure parking lot. Approximately 10 police cars were there that had been there at the time of the release. The lot was across the street from the substation approximately 180 ft away from the ruptured equipment. My inspection of the vehicles or surfaces (glass, brick, metal roof) on the building behind the vehicles showed no signs of oiling. After leaving the police lot I did a driving tour of areas three blocks west of the substation. I stopped and looked at foliage and vehicles in driveways that were clearly inoperable (eg. on blocks, flat tires) and saw no signs of staining. I spoke to two residents during my tour and they said they had not observed any signs of release, but were aware of the fire because they lost power. I left the site at 930 hrs.

I spoke with Mr. Stodd by phone at 1000 hrs who informed me that a smaller crew would be returning later on Sunday to conduct more sampling and a full crew would be returning Monday to work on areas within the substation. I informed him I would also be by in the morning, but had been satisfied with what I had observed on my tour.

Monday 2/21/2011

Walk site and Memorial Park. It was raining lightly and and I inspected side walk and street for signs of sheening and observed none. Spoke with PGE clean up crew working inside substation, they estimated work within the substation would be completed the week of 2/28/2011. I spoke with two residents about the spill and clean up effort, both seemed satisfied with the progress. I also visited the Thrift Store and spoke with the manager, she was also please with the progress.

Tuesday 2/22/2011

Received email from Dr. Michael Holcomb of Oregon Health Division, who informed me that he had spoken on the telephone with a concerned resident whose car and north side of house had been drifted on. I received the message while in transit from Seattle. I arrived in Newberg at approximately 4:30 PM and went to the citizens residence. He described a light misting and that he had taken his car through a carwash (paid by PGE) and that he washed the impacted area with a garden hose. No visible signs of oil remained. I spoke with him for approximately thirty minutes and offered to have impacted surfaces sampled. He declined the offer and said he was satisfied with the information Dr. Holcomb and I had provided.

Afterward, I walked the site to look for sheening and observed no significant amounts.

Thursday 2/24/2011

I met with Mr. Stodd at the site. When I arrived Stodd was collecting soil confirmation samples. We walked the site and discussed ongoing clean up work. Mr. Stodd reiterated that work would be completed during the week of 2/28. Mr. Stodd informed me that a decision had been made to cut down the four trees that had been impacted. He said they would be cut up and placed into roll off boxes and sent to the Hillsboro landfill where the soils had been sent.

Friday 2/25/2011

Mr. Stodd emailed confirmation sample results, for impacted areas outside the substation. All results were non-detect for PCB. Mr. Stodd said he would be submitting a report about the incident and the clean up to EPA and ODEQ in March.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

See Narrative above

2.1.3 Enforcement Activities, Identity of Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs)

PGE has taken responsibility for the clean up and has been cooperating

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>
Spilled mineral oil	soil and sorbent	25 yards		land disposal	

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

PGE Incident Report submission to EPA and ODEQ.

2.2.2 Issues

None

2.3 Logistics Section

ICS not in place

2.4 Finance Section

2.4.1 Narrative

NA

2.5 Other Command Staff

2.5.1 Safety Officer

NA

2.6 Liaison Officer

NA

2.7 Information Officer

2.7.1 Public Information Officer

A reporter from an small on line paper (the Oregon Herald) was on scene all day 2/19/2011. He spoke with Mr Stodd at length called the NRC and ODEQ and talked to many neighbors. I tried multiple time to connect with him but failed. He finally called me at 2000 hrs on 2/19/2011. We spoke for approximately an hour and I explained that I had been working closely with ODEQ and PGE to ensure that the situation was being properly handled. He told me that he had observed a profusion of oil up to five blocks away from the site. We closed the interview amicably enough but my tour of the sight on 2/20/2011 was to confirm what PGE had reported, that the contamination was largely confined to the Howard St. site.

2.7.2 Community Involvement Coordinator

I spoke with eight residents over the course of two days and none expressed concern about how the situation was being addressed.

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

NA

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

ODEQ, Newberg Fire and Police

4. Personnel On Site

PGE crew numbering approximately 15.

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.

POLREP #2 Last Updated 5/18/2011