

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
Mertz Road Mercury Spill - Removal Polrep  
Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region V

**Subject:** POLREP #1  
Initial Pollution Report  
Mertz Road Mercury Spill  
C549  
Caro, MI  
Latitude: 43.4490059 Longitude: -83.3854761

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**From:** Jon Gulch, On-Scene Coordinator

**Date:** 5/5/2011

**Reporting Period:** May 5-6, 2011

## 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 Action
<b>NPL Status:</b> Non NPL	<b>Operable Unit:</b>
<b>Mobilization Date:</b> 5/5/2011	<b>Start Date:</b> 5/5/2011
<b>Demob Date:</b>	<b>Completion Date:</b>
<b>CERCLIS ID:</b>	<b>RCRIS ID:</b>
<b>ERNS No.:</b>	<b>State Notification:</b>
<b>FPN#:</b>	<b>Reimbursable Account #:</b>

#### 1.1.1 Incident Category

Emergency Response

#### 1.1.2 Site Description

On Thursday May 5, 2011, a mercury spill was discovered in Caro, Tuscola County, Michigan and reported to the National Response Center (NRC #979495). U.S. EPA (EPA) was contacted by the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and assistance was requested in responding to evaluate and potentially perform an Emergency Removal Action. EPA coordinated with the Tuscola County Health Department (TCHD) to receive an situational briefing and assist with access to the property. During the situational briefing, it was documented that a half full jar containing approximately 2 pounds of mercury was brought to the TCHD by an individual who also stated that there were mercury beads inside a home that she once occupied. The remaining mercury is suspected of being released inside the subject residential property. TCHD visited this property and identified an area inside the home where the mercury was spilled

and elevated vapor readings were obtained with a Lumex Mercury Vapor Analyzer (Lumex).

EPA mobilized its Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) contractor to assist with screening the home and any other impacted off-Site property. After elevated levels were found inside the home, EPA mobilized its Emergency and Rapid Response Service (ERRS) contractor to begin removing free mercury beads and any mercury contaminated items from the home.

#### **1.1.2.1 Location**

The residential property is located on Mertz road in Caro, Tuscola County, Michigan. The property is occupied by four adults living in the main living area and one person that occupies a lower level of the home (former garage area).

#### **1.1.2.2 Description of Threat**

Elemental Mercury present in a residential property and suspected of being tracked into the environment.

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

On May 5, 2011, TCHD used a Lumex to screen the inside of the home where the mercury was spilled. Readings inside the home ranged from 6,000-22,000ng/m<sup>3</sup> in the breathing zone and up to 100,000 ng/m<sup>3</sup> in the immediate vicinity of the mercury that was visible in the back of the house.

## **2. Current Activities**

### **2.1 Operations Section**

#### **2.1.1 Narrative**

On May 5, 2011 at approximately 1630, EPA and START arrived at the TCHD and received a situational briefing from TCHD, Tuscola County Fire Department (TCFD) and Tuscola County Sheriff's Department (TCSD). After the meeting, the group proceeded to the residential property to meet with the homeowner. Verbal access was given to EPA and its contractors to screen and perform a Removal Action, if needed. The shoes of all four adult occupants were screened using a Lumex. In addition, both vehicles and the family dog were screened and all results obtained were below 50 ng/m<sup>3</sup>. All action levels for screening and clearance of the residential property are being provided by the TCHD, with consultation with EPA and the MDCH.

EPA, START and TCHD then entered the home and began screening. All windows and doors within the home were open and the mudroom area, where the mercury was spilled, was sealed off with plastic and duct tape. The initial breathing zone readings were all below 1,000 ng/m<sup>3</sup> throughout the upper living area of the home including the bedrooms, living room and kitchen area. The mudroom readings (behind the plastic barrier) were above 24,000 ng/m<sup>3</sup>. The windows and doors were then closed to allow the temperature to rise prior to a final screening to determine if the residents could stay in the home.

At approximately 1845, a second potentially impacted residence on Deckerville Road was screened and readings were not above background.

At approximately 2045, the impacted home was rescreened. The breathing zone reading at the front door was approximately 2,500 mg/3 and continued throughout the home. Based on these readings, the TCHD advised the residents that they could not occupy the house and posted the house as quarantined.

Based on the readings, EPA mobilized ERRS with plans to begin addressing the clean-up at 0630 hours on 05/06/11.

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

ERRS is on-site removing all elemental mercury and impacted items from the home.

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

NA

#### **2.1.4 Progress Metrics**

- Two children that recently moved from the subject property and were thought to have been potentially contaminated were screened, along with the house where they currently reside. No elevated readings were obtained on their shoes or in the house.
- The family dog was washed with a specific brand of shampoo, as guided by MDCH. No elevated readings were obtained when screened with the Lumex.

### **2.2 Planning Section**

#### **2.2.1 Anticipated Activities**

- Remove Elemental Mercury beads from residential property.
- Restore residential property to livable condition.
- Demobilize ERRS Crew from Site.
- Perform disposal of Mercury and Mercury contaminated material and debris.

#### **2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities**

Complete Removal Action

#### **2.2.1.2 Next Steps**

Complete Removal Action

#### **2.2.2 Issues**

None at this time.

### **2.3 Logistics Section**

NA

### **2.4 Finance Section**

No information available at this time.

### **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**

To date, there has been no media interest in the Emergency Response.

##### **2.7.2 Community Involvement Coordinator**

NA

### **3. Participating Entities**

#### **3.1 Unified Command**

EPA

Caro Fire Department

Tuscola County Sheriff Department

Tuscola County Health Department

Michigan Department of Community Health

#### **3.2 Cooperating Agencies**

EPA

Caro Fire Department

Tuscola County Sheriff Department

Tuscola County Health Department

Michigan Department of Community Health

### **4. Personnel On Site**

EPA - 1

START - 2

ERRS - 5

### **5. Definition of Terms**

NA

### **6. Additional sources of information**

#### **6.1 Internet location of additional information/report**

NA

#### **6.2 Reporting Schedule**

NA

### **7. Situational Reference Materials**

NA