

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Tanker Truck (MEK) Explosion - Removal Polrep
Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region V

Subject: **POLREP #1**
Initial Pollution Report - Tank Truck Explosion
Tanker Truck (MEK) Explosion

Sawyer, MI
Latitude: 41.8877170 Longitude: -86.6036120

To:
From: Theresa Holz, On Scene Coordinator
Date: 7/23/2011
Reporting Period: 7/22/2011 - 7/23/2011

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Contract Number:
D.O. Number:	Action Memo Date:
Response Authority: CERCLA	Response Type: Emergency
Response Lead: PRP	Incident Category:
NPL Status: Non NPL	Operable Unit:
Mobilization Date: 7/22/2011	Start Date: 7/22/2011
Demob Date:	Completion Date:
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:
ERNS No.:	State Notification:
FPN#:	Reimbursable Account #:

1.1.1 Incident Category
Emergency Response

1.1.2 Site Description

On 7/21/11 at 1934 hrs, an explosion occurred in a tanker truck transporting 4600 gallons of a mix of approximately 86% water, 13% Sodium Hydroxide, and 1% Methyl Ethyl Ketone (MEK) in Sawyer, Berrien County, Michigan, and into the Sawyer drain sewer which discharges to Deer Creek which is a tributary to Lake Michigan. The explosion occurred at a truck stop (Travel America) at Exit 12 off of I-94 in Benton Harbor, Michigan. The responsible parties, Marcus Trucking and Clean Harbors, are conducting cleanup operations under the oversight of the Chikaming Fire Department, local (Berrien County) and state government (MDEQ) officials, and USEPA.

At 1400, MDEQ requested USEPA support for water sampling and overall response support. OSC Holz arrived on scene at 1730 on 7/22/11 and was accompanied by two START members.

Prior to USEPA getting on site, PRPs conducted the following cleanup activities:

- Recovering source area liquids via vacuum truck
- Decontamination of ruptured tanker truck and loaded ruptured pieces onto flat bed
- Recovering impacted liquids from the creek via vacuum truck

Current Activities

The impacted Deer Creek is approximately 1.25 miles long. Contractors have created two earthen berms in between the release point and Lake Michigan. The first berm is located at the discharge of the sewer into Deer Creek just north of Sawyer Road. The second berm is located on the east side of Tower Hill Road and just north of Gandy Lane. START is monitoring the pH in between the berms hourly and has recorded readings between approximately 10 and 11. MDEQ is monitoring the pH at the confluence of Deer Creek and Lake Michigan, readings at this location have been approximately 7 pH units. No odors or vapors are evident. Exit 12 on Eastbound I-94 and a portion of Sawyer Road is currently closed.

During the reporting period, cleanup contractors performed the following activities:

- Completed ruptured tanker truck decontamination

- Power washed parking lot where explosion occurred
- Vacuumed impacted areas of the creek with high pH (near earthen berms)

During pH testing between berms and at the area near the confluence of Deer Creek and Lake Michigan, MDEQ and USEPA contractor collected samples to be analyzed by the HAZMAT ID. HAZMAT ID reported the samples as containing Water.

With MDEQ assistance, the USEPA contractor collected split samples with Clean Harbors in three areas on Deer Creek - just east of the first berm, just east of the second berm, and at the confluence of Lake Michigan and the creek. A water sample and a sediment sample were collected at each of the three areas sampled. The USEPA samples are to be analyzed for VOCs, pH, and metals. Clean Harbors is to analyze their samples for pH and VOCs.

Warren Dunes State Park is located approximately 1.1 miles north of where Deer Creek empties into Lake Michigan. The Conservation Officer closed the beach at Warren Dunes State Park early afternoon on 7/22/2011. The beach will reopen the morning of 7/23/2011, due to neutral pH readings at the confluence of Lake Michigan and Deer Creek and the apparent lack of further migration of the spilled material. MDEQ and USEPA continue to monitor pH readings at the Tower Road berm and the confluence of Deer Creek and Lake Michigan.

Deer Creek remains closed for the weekend.

Next steps

- Prepare berms for inclement weather
- Continue vac operations along creek
- Begin flushing sewers which lead to creek

1.1.2.1 Location

Spill occurred at 6100 Sawyer Road in Benton Harbor, Michigan.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Caustic liquid spilled at truck stop and into storm sewer which emptied into Deer Creek.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.2 Planning Section

No information available at this time.

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

No information available at this time.

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.