United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region VII
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Saturday, August 14, 2004
From: Davis, Garvey, Nold

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Subject: Omaha Lead Site
Greater Omaha Nebraska Area, Omaha, NE
Latitude: 41.2033000
Longitude: -95.9308000

POLREP No.:	33	**Site #:**	NESFN0703481
Reporting Period:	August 10-14, 2004	**D.O. #:**	0006
Start Date:	9/25/2003	**Response Authority:**	CERCLA
Mob Date:	3/22/2004	**Response Type:**	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		**NPL Status:**	NPL
Completion Date:		**Incident Category:**	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:	NESFN0703481	**Contract #**	68-S7-02-04
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description
The site is located in the Omaha metropolitan area and encompasses Council Bluffs, Iowa, Carter Lake, Iowa, and east Omaha. All of the site activities are centered around downtown Omaha, Nebraska.

ASARCO Incorporated (ASARCO) operated a lead refinery at 500 Douglas Street in Omaha, Nebraska, for over 100 years beginning in the 1870s. The operation of the refinery ceased in 1997. As a routine part of the refinery operation, lead particles were emitted into the atmosphere at the refinery. In addition, the Gould Incorporated Lead Battery Recycling Plant was located at 555 Farnam Street in Omaha and was a secondary smelter of lead from discarded lead batteries. The blast furnace used to smelt the lead at the Gould plant emitted lead particles into the air from that refinery. The Gould plant closed in 1982.

Several other facilities in the Omaha area used lead in their manufacturing processes. A few of these included Carter White Lead at 21st and Locust Street which produced white lead paint bases, red lead and litharge protective coatings until 1936, Omaha Shot and Lead which later became Lawrence Shot and Lead and then became National Lead Company which manufactured lead shot by melting pig lead, Grant Storage Battery Company, Storage Battery Factory, and Exide Corporation which manufactured lead storage batteries.

Numerous other locations in the Omaha area such as foundries, iron works, metal salvaging companies and other manufacturers also used or processed lead at their facilities.

Current Activities
On March 25, 2004, an Action Memorandum Amendment was signed. This amendment changes the scope of work to include daycare facilities and elevated blood levels (EBLs) that were previously addressed under the first Action Memorandum, however, still addresses highly contaminated properties with lead-soil concentrations of 1,200 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) or greater.

Continued activities are being centralized from the Missouri River Treatment Plant located at 5600 S. 10th Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68107-3501. The city of Omaha has partnered with the EPA to allow the use of a portion of the facility.

There were 9 properties excavated, 8 backfilled, and 10 sodded during this reporting period. So far,

during this time-critical removal action (phase III), there have been a total of 163 properties excavated, 159 backfilled, and 143 sodded. Some delays pertaining to sodding the properties have been experienced. This has occurred semi-frequently throughout all three phases of the removal action. Continued communication with the sod sub-contractor is on-going to emphasize timing and coordination of the work tasks.

A test plot was constructed at the Missouri River Treatment Plant to evaluate the viability of hydro-seeding. The test plot area was backfilled with the exact soil currently used on properties that had a removal action completed by the EPA. An additional test plot was established in a lot at 1807 Lake Street. Communications are ongoing with possible hydro-seed, sub-contractors and the EPA in developing a long term strategy for hydro-seeding. Slight adjustments to the test plot area have been implemented to study different hydro-seed techniques to assure the most effective application(s)concerning future use.

It should be noted that as an additional safeguard, EPA sampled the sod, that is currently being applied to all properties that have had an EPA clean-up performed,for total lead. The resulting lead level was well below any levels of concern.

Based on current financial projections, the EPA will reach the current funding ceiling by the middle of August 2004. There is a sufficient list of assigned properties to take the work into early October. The EPA will increase the funding ceiling (after August 15, 2004) and also add additional properties to the removal group's list.

Planned Removal Actions

Continued prioritization will be given to EBLs, day care facilities, and highly contaminated properties where children six years of age or younger live. All of these higher priority locations received thus far, have been completed, therefore, geographic groupings of properties have been implemented to utilize resources and to create continuity in the community.

There are currently 23 EPA Emergency and Rapid Response Service (ERRS) contractors and 2 Mini-Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) personnel working extended work hours, 6 days a week. The breakdown of personnel is comprised of two excavation crews and two backfill crews. There is also a "punch list crew" that follows behind the other work teams to re-install fences and other needed repairs. Then, a local sod subcontractor lays/installs new sod on the properties. A few of the final steps include having the sod watered by the EPA for a two week period. At that point, the property owner is provided with an instruction sheet (bilingual) that explains future care steps concerning the sod and is encouraged to take over the responsibilities of care. After that, a final letter is sent to the property owner stating that the clean-up has been completed and a sketch of the property depicting the EPA assessment/actions is also provided to the property owner.

Next Steps

The greater Omaha area has received a significant amount of rainfall this year. There have been seven significant amounts of rain so far in July and August 2004. This has resulted in minor delays concerning the sod sub-contractor, accessing backfill source areas and some erosion that has occurred on residential yards. Dryer weather conditions are expected in the area in the coming months, reducing any future delays.

Key Issues

There is a list of 579 properties, with greater than 1,200 parts per million (ppm) lead, that is currently being prioritized for this phase of the project. On June 26, 2004, 318 of those properties were taken off the EPA Removal Branch's list to be utilized for a pilot project through the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to complete. This should assist in the goal of completing all of the 579 properties by the end of 2004.

On Monday, August 9, 2004, an additional grouping of 40 properties was received by the EPA Removal Branch and will be scheduled to have the lead-contaminated soils cleaned-up. Of those additional 40 properties, 8 are EBLs and 1 is a day care.

Any additional EBLs or day cares (affecting children), once received, are given the highest priority.

After the prioritized properties have been cleaned up, geographic locations will be utilized to maximize available resources concerning the greater than 1,200 ppm lead-contaminated properties. Sometimes there are difficulties encountered when attempting to contact property owners concerning scheduling to remain in a general area, however, diligent efforts toward this goal are being maintained.

Disposition of Wastes

All of the lead-contaminated soil that is being removed from the day cares, EBLs, and greater than 1,200 ppm properties is temporarily stockpiled at the Missouri River Treatment Plant.

The lead-contaminated soil is accumulated in 1,000 cubic-yard stockpiles. There have been 8 stockpiles of contaminated soil created and either transported or scheduled to be transported during this phase of the removal action. The ninth stockpile is being accumulated at this time.

Once a 1,000 cubic-yard pile is created, a composite sample is taken and analyzed for Toxic Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP) lead and total lead analysis, in preparation for shipment.

During the last two phases of the time-critical removal action, the contaminated soil has been sent to the Loess Hills Regional Sanitary Landfill, 59722 290th Street, located in Malvern, Iowa 51551.

response.epa.gov/OmahaLeadPhaseIV