

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Westlake Chemical Fire - Removal Polrep
Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region VI

Subject: POLREP #1
Initial
Westlake Chemical Fire
Geismar, LA
Latitude: 30.2247645 Longitude: -91.0012756

To: Lawrence Stanton, EPA HQ
Peter Ricca, LDEQ
Ragan Broyles, Superfund Division

From: William Rhotenberry, OSC

Date: 3/22/2012

Reporting Period: March 22, 2012

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	Contract Number:
D.O. Number:	Action Memo Date:
Response Authority: CERCLA	Response Type: Emergency
Response Lead: EPA	Incident Category: Removal Assessment
NPL Status: Non NPL	Operable Unit:
Mobilization Date: 3/22/2012	Start Date: 3/22/2012
Demob Date:	Completion Date:
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:
ERNS No.:	State Notification:
FPN#:	Reimbursable Account #:

1.1.1 Incident Category

At 1001 hours on 22 March 2012, the National Response Center (NRC) received a report from the Ascension Parish Sheriff's Office of an explosion and fire at the Westlake Chemical facility located at 36045 Highway 30 in Geismar, Ascension Parish, Louisiana. The incident was assigned NRC Report# 1006517. An unknown amount of Chlorine, Hydrogen Chloride and Vinyl Chloride were released as a result of the explosion and fire. The cause of the explosion is unknown at this time.

1.1.2 Site Description

Westlake Chemical facility is a vinyl chloride monomer (VCM) and ethylene dichloride (EDC) refinery located within an industrial/commercial area of Ascension Parish. An explosion occurred within a VCM distillation tower which resulted in a release of chlorine, hydrogen chloride, VCM and EDC. Fire monitor cannons were used to extinguish the fire.

1.1.2.1 Location

The incident occurred at the Westlake Chemical facility located at 36045 Highway 30 in Geismar, Ascension Parish, Louisiana. The facility is bordered by industrial facilities to the south and east; commercial business to the north and farm land to the west.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

The fire has been extinguished. VCM drier tanks and a chlorine vaporizer tank located near the VCM tower where the fire occurred, are considered to be the primary threats at this time. Facility personnel are making plans to move the chemicals so that the VCM tower can be worked on safely. LDEQ has conducted chlorine and acid gas air monitoring at the incident location as well as along the perimeter of the facility. All air monitoring results have been reported as non-detect.

1.1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

OSC Rhotenberry and START-3 contractors responded to the incident and met with Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), Louisiana State Police, Gonzales Fire Department, Acension Parish

Sheriff's Office, Ascension Parish Office of Homeland Security and Westlake Chemical representatives. LSP stated that Westlake personnel had conducted initial air monitoring for chlorine gas near the incident location and no results above background were reported. Water cannons were set up near the incident area and continue to spray water over the area as a precaution. EPA Region 6 mobilized the ASPECT plane to overfly the facility and conduct chemical monitoring. No chemical detections were reported.

LDEQ has mobilized their Mobile Air Monitoring Lab (MAML) to the facility and has begun air monitoring for VOCs, including Vinyl Chloride and EDC. No results above background have been reported. LDEQ personnel have also begun perimeter air monitoring with chlorine and acid gas Porta Sens Monitors. Westlake Chemical has contracted with the Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health (CTEH) to conduct continuous air monitoring at various locations within the facility. CTEH has reported no detections on all of their monitoring to this point.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

Westlake Chemical and Louisiana State Police representatives have made entries to the unit where the fire/explosion occurred. There are three VCM Drier Tanks located north of the VCM distillation tower that contain approximately 3,000 gallons of VCM. There is also a Chlorine Vaporizer Tank located west of the VCM Tower that contains Chlorine. Due to the close proximity, current response activities are focused on removing the VCM material from the drier tanks and the Chlorine from the vaporizer tank in order to be able to address the VCM Tower safely. CTEH has also began air monitoring activities within the facility and around the perimeter.

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

Westlake Chemical at 36045 Highway 30 in Geismar, Ascension Parish, Louisiana is listed as the responsible party.

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

<i>Waste Stream</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Quantity</i>	<i>Manifest #</i>	<i>Treatment</i>	<i>Disposal</i>

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

Removal of the VCM material within the drier tanks and the Chlorine within the Vaporizer Unit.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

LDEQ and CTEH will continue facility and perimeter air monitoring activities.

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

2.2.2 Issues

Some operations may be limited during nighttime.

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.

POLREP #1 Last Updated 6/17/2013