U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Rutgers Busch Cooling Tower Release - Removal Polrep
Initial and Final Removal Polrep

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region II

Subject: **POLREP #1**
Rutgers Busch Cooling Tower Release

Piscataway, NJ
Latitude: 40.5211100 Longitude: -74.4628448

To: Keith Glenn, Region 2, ERRD, RPB
Ellen Banner, USEPA Region 02
Michelle Tabayoyong, ERRD/RAB

From: Michelle Tabayoyong, OSC
Date: 4/26/2012
Reporting Period:

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:		**Contract Number:**	
D.O. Number:		**Action Memo Date:**	
Response Authority:		**Response Type:**	Emergency
Response Lead:	PRP	**Incident Category:**	Removal Action
NPL Status:		**Operable Unit:**	
Mobilization Date:		**Start Date:**	4/24/2012
Demob Date:		**Completion Date:**	4/25/2012
CERCLIS ID:		**RCRIS ID:**	
ERNS No.:		**State Notification:**	
FPN#:		**Reimbursable Account #:**	

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

On April 24, 2012 the REOC received a communication through Bob Spiegel, Edison Wetlands Association. Mr. Spiegel received an anonymous tip that a biocide had been released from Rutgers University, Busch Campus located in Piscataway, sometime in September 2011. The allegation stated that a worker noticed a biocide leak for over a week from one of the buildings. The allegation continued to state by the time Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety personnel responded to the release, material made its way all the way down to the Raritan River.

The REOC searched notifications through the Regional Public Liaison, the hotline notification logs, and the National Response Center database. The search period was August 2011 to November 2011. During this time neither EPA nor our USCG counterparts were notified of a chemical spill at Rutgers University, Busch Campus.

The REOC contacted the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) Bureau of Emergency Response (BER), southern branch, and requested a notification search. Again, personnel searched from August 2011 to November 2011. During the search period, 3 spills were found. The first was a hydraulic oil spill from a garbage truck and the second from a bus transmission oil leak; both in September 2011. The third was reported on October 28, 2011 to NJDEP directly from Rutgers. It involved a release of approximately 50 gallons of cooling water to a storm drain due to a blockage. The report was forwarded to the NJDEP water program, incident #408055.

EPA REOC contacted the Rutgers Environmental Health and Safety and asked for additional information about the biocide release. Rutgers personnel stated that there was a release of cooling water dosed with biocides to the storm drain due to a valve failure on October 28, 2011. The REOC requested additional information, including the MSDSs for the water treatment chemicals. By close of business April 24, 2012, this information had not been received.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

On April 25, 2012 OSCs Tabayoyong and Banner responded to Rutgers Busch Campus to meet with Environmental Health and Safety and Facilities personnel. Middlesex County Health Department was coincidentally also on-scene, acting on authority of NJDEP, due to receiving an anonymous tip on April 9, 2012 of a biocide spill (NJDEP Incident # 421675).

EPA OSCs inspected the building where the air conditioning cooling system was located. On October 28, 2011 an internal failure (float valve) of the system caused a minimum release of 3,500 gallons of cooling water containing biocides. The material spilled onto the roof of the structure where it ran into the stormwater system. Materials released to the stormwater system are captured and carried underground to an open creek located on the Busch Campus. This is the path the release followed. From the open creek, the cooling water passed underground to a retention pond located at the golf course on campus. The retention pond has an overflow cell, to which the material flowed into. An inspection by Rutgers personnel following the incident indicated stressed vegetation around the retention pond, most likely due to contact with the cooling water as residual byproducts could be seen.

The overflow water then moved via underground piping, under Johnson Park, and into the Raritan River. The amount of cooling water released is unknown because the system continued to send mechanical signals that additional cooling water (and biocides) was needed. It is unknown when the system initially failed because the release was not noticed until people complained about an odor coming from a stormwater grate.

On March 21, 2012 an additional release occurred with the same unit, due to operator error. New personnel were conducting routine maintenance on the cooling system when they accidentally released the entire 3,500 gallon contents to the stormwater system instead of the sanitary sewer system. The cooling water followed the same path as described above, however it did not overflow outside of the retention pond and did not make it to the Raritan River. NJDEP was notified of the release and the water program visited the building shortly following. A Notice of Violation was submitted to Rutgers on April 24, 2012 by NJDEP due to violations associated with discharging material outside of permitted allowances.

The biocide is maintained in the basement of the building with no alarm to indicate any unusual use.

Following the March 2012 release, Rutgers has performed a number of changes on the cooling system. New piping has been permanently installed so that any release from the system will go to the sanitary sewer system and not the stormwater system. The internal float was removed and replaced by a more advanced mechanism.

In light of the actions taken in reponse to the two releases - the results of which were observed by EPA on April 25, 2012 - it has been determined that no further action is warranted or anticipated.

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

Rutgers Environmental Health & Safety (848-445-2550) - http://rehs.rutgers.edu/rehs_contact.html

27 Road 1, Piscatway, NJ 08854

Mark McClane - mmclane@aps.rutgers.edu

Rich Bankowski - rbankowski@aps.rutgers.edu

Susan Dickison (848-445-3031) - dickison@aps.rutgers.edu

James Simoni - jsimoni@aps.rutgers.edu

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

Waste Stream	*Medium*	*Quantity*	*Manifest #*	*Treatment*	*Disposal*
Magnesium Chloride	Liquid Waste	3,500 gallons			

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

3.1 Unified Command

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

State of New Jersey - Department of Environmental Protection

Bryan Barrett (609) 439-6355 - bryan.barrett@dep.state.nj.us

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.