

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Summerville Mill Fire - Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region IV

Subject: POLREP #2
Response Continues Debris Separation / Multimedia Monitoring / Water Management
Summerville Mill Fire

Summerville, GA
Latitude: 34.4507850 Longitude: -85.3864290

To: Eddie Henderson, EMA
Jerry Campbell, GA EPD/DNR

From: Leo Francendese, OSC

Date: 7/30/2012

Reporting Period: 7/29/2012 to 7/30/2012

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 Action
NPL Status: Non NPL	Operable Unit:
Mobilization Date: 7/27/2012	Start Date: 7/27/2012
Demob Date:	Completion Date:
CERCLIS ID:	RCRIS ID:
ERNS No.:	State Notification:
FPN#:	Reimbursable Account #:

1.1.1 Incident Category

The incident is an emergency response

1.1.2 Site Description

A plastic recycling facility caught fire the evening of July 27, 2012. The facility is housed in an old mill and was fully engulfed in the fire. EMA and local officials ordered an evacuation within 1/4 mile circumference of the facility and 1/2 mile downwind of the facility. Residents within 5 miles were informed to shelter in place. Multiple types of plastic were stored at the site in large quantities, including polyethylene terephthalate (PET) and polyvinyl chloride (PVC).

1.1.2.1 Location

The site is located in Summerville, Chattooga County, Georgia

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

The blaze initially broke out between 4:00 and 4:30 pm on Friday July 27, 2012. The blaze engulfed multiple structures on a 10 acre facility which primarily stored shredded, and to be recycled, plastics. Chattooga County EMA and local officials evacuated residents within a quarter mile of the facility and issued a shelter in place declaration within five miles of the facility due to the intensity. While multiple structures were threatened by the blaze, the fire was mostly fed by the PET. The fire also threatened a warehouse containing a large quantity of PVC.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

After dispatch by the duty OSC, OSC Francendese requested START contact IMAAC in order to determine the potential extent of the plume. Enroute to the fire, the OSC was provided information by IMAAC confirming the potential extent of the plume and unacceptable air quality. The breakdown products of PET primarily indicated the PM 2.5 risk driven action levels. In addition, breakdown products of PET indicated secondary chemicals of concern that were subject to recombustion due to heat. While continuing to the response, the OSC contacted the director and was informed that this was an "all resources to bear" response.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

The OSC arrived on scene shortly after midnight. Upon arrival, the OSC was requested to join Unified

Command and to assist in combating the fire and protecting public health. In addition to coordinating with IMAAC, the OSC requested START support for perimeter air monitoring. START arrived on-site around 0200 on June 28th, 2012. START immediately began on-scene monitoring as well as establishing a perimeter to determine the effectiveness of the evacuation and additional public health advisories. After further consult with the county EMA director and Unified Command, OSC Francendese was requested to provide heavy equipment to assist with firefighting actions. Shortly after 0200 the OSC met with the property owner on-scene and issued a NOFI and secured access. In addition, the owner notified the OSC that he was unable to provide requested support, i.e. the heavy equipment. Upon notification, the OSC issued the owner a NOFA and requested ERRS mobilization and sufficient resources to assist in the firefighting.

OSC Eichinger also mobilized to the site, arriving shortly after 0200, to assist OSC Francendese with health and safety and operations coordination.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

July 28

START continued to provide coordinated activities with IMAAC and air monitoring reports throughout the course of firefighting activities.

ERRS provided heavy equipment and arrived on-site at approximately 0700 on July 28.

Firefighting activities throughout the night reduced, but did not eliminate the blaze. At approximately 0830, the blaze reignited with increased intensity moving along a previously unburned section of the site. The blaze quickly moved through this new area and began to threaten a warehouse housing a large quantity of PVC. Hundreds of firefighters mobilized on the morning of the 28th to combat the renewed blaze and managed to prevent the fire from consuming the warehouse. In addition, the heavy equipment began operating in conjunction with firefighting activities to provide debris separation to fully extinguish the plastic fuel sources and prevent recombustion.

Copious amounts of water, needed to fight the fire, created a pressing need for an available source of water. OSC Francendese provided permission for the city of Summerville to draw water from a nearby creek beyond their normal permitted levels. The drinking water intake for the city of Summerville exists upgradient of the fire and water need considerations were balanced with firefighting resource needs. Water was drawn from Raccon Creek approximately 3000 feet downstream from the site; this facilitated continuous visual monitoring by firefighter personnel who reported no observable impacts (i.e. no dead fish, no discoloration, no debris, etc.)

July 29

As of the evening of the 28th, the prevailing winds changed to a North to South wind. START captured the change on perimeter air monitoring. Evacuation and shelter in place advisories continued in effect to the morning of the 29th.

Due to firefighting activities being required around the clock, OSC Francendese requested further support to continue 24-hour operations. At approximately 1400 additional START support arrived on-scene and at approximately 1800 OSC Huyser arrived and ERRS provided an additional rotational staff.

During the morning of July 29, START conducted a radiation survey using a Ludlum Model 3. The results of the survey indicated no detections above background.

At approximately noon on July 29, OSC Francendese and START met with County EMA and Unified Command. After review of air monitoring data from the previous night, public health advisories were reduced to a 0.25-mile radius shelter in place advisory and a two-mile radius "restrict outdoor activities" advisory.

As of the afternoon of the 29th, over 400 firefighters and 50 agencies have assisted in the combating of the blaze and protection of public health. Substantial progress has been made in the elimination of open flames. The response continues to conduct debris separation and firefighting activities to completely extinguish the fire and eliminate the opportunity for recombustion. The use of 1% surfactant (MSDS listed in docs section) was initiated during the morning of the 29th.

The yards of two residential properties were flooded as a consequence of necessary firefighting activities. The OSC was requested to assist Unified Command in managing and rerouting this water via Raccon Creek. The OSC has tasked ERRS to pump and reroute the water back to firefighting operations, as well as create on-site drainage modifications to prevent future flooding during firefighting operations. In addition, START has collected water samples and plans to collect soil samples from the residential properties once the water is removed.

The evening of July 29th, ERRS began removing water from the two flooded residential properties. As of 1730 on July 30, the water removal from one residence is complete and the other residence is approximately 75 % complete.

July 30

On the morning of July 30th, OSC Francendese met with County EMA and Unified Command. After review of air monitoring data from the previous night, public health advisories were reduced to a 0.25-mile radius advisory to avoid outdoor smoke. See the documents section for the fact sheet.

Fire suppression activities continued to work in conjunction with heavy equipment to eliminate recombustion and minimize smoke. Significant progress has been made utilizing this technique and fire suppression and fuel source segregation is expected to be complete by tomorrow, July 31. As of the afternoon of the 30th, approximately 10,000,000 gallons of water have been utilized for firefighting activities.

On July 30, START collected two soil samples from the flooded properties below the high water mark. START also collected air samples for SVOCs from within a quarter mile of the site. Air monitoring activities were moved to within a 0.25-mile of the site.

As the fire is extinguishing, incomplete combustion results in more hazardous smoke. Therefore, personnel entering the facility fence are required to wear respiratory protection when downwind of the smoke plume.

In conjunction with Unified Command, OSC Francendese met with state representatives from both the Solid Waste Management and Water Quality programs of the Georgia EPD. GA EPD agreed to assume transitional management of the site for storm water management and solid waste management after the fire is fully extinguished. The RP has committed to Phase 1 storm water management activities which will be conducted under GA EPD management. For further information please contact the GA EPD representatives noted in the contact section.

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

OSC Francendese has met with the owner and secured access. The owner has been unable to provide necessary support functions during this response. The owner has been issued a NOFA.

On the afternoon of the 29th Georgia EPD sent SOSC J.R. Campbell who subsequently met with Unified Command and spoke to the property owner.

GA EPD Water Quality and Solid Waste representatives came to the site on July 30 to assess site conditions and met with the property owner concerning solid waste and potential storm water management issues.

2.1.4 Progress Metrics

n/a

2.2 Planning Section

2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

Continued support of firefighting activities until the fire is completely extinguished. The support includes water management and heavy equipment assistance in firefighting.

Air monitoring will continue to support both on-site operations and perimeter monitoring extending approximately 0.25-mile downwind to protect public health.

2.3 Logistics Section

n/a

2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

2.5 Other Command Staff

n/a

3. Participating Entities

3.1 Unified Command

EPA Operations are in coordination with Unified Command.

3.2 Cooperating Agencies

Over 50 agencies have participated in this response.

4. Personnel On Site

Since the morning of the 28th, the following EPA personnel have participated:

3 OSCs
7 START
7 ERRS

5. Definition of Terms

n/a

6. Additional sources of information

6.1 Internet location of additional information/report

Please see links and the document section for extensive press coverage and EPA-produced documents in support of Unified Command.

7. Situational Reference Materials

n/a