

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region VI
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, October 25, 2004

From: Scott Harris, Ph.D.

Subject: Initial and Final POLREP

Bonham Pesticide Fire

Hwy 56 and FM 2925, Bonham, TX

Latitude: 33.5772700

Longitude: -96.1300100

POLREP No.:	1	Site #:	NRC 739333
Reporting Period:	10/24-25/2004	D.O. #:	
Start Date:		Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	10/24/2004	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Assessment
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

On 24 October, 2004 the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) notified Environmental Protection Agency Region 6 Response and Prevention Branch (EPA-RPB) of a combined pesticide and tire fire at a private facility. Local residents reported that numerous 55-gallon drums containing pesticides were involved. EPA reported the incident to the National Response Center (NRC# 739333) at 1045 hours. The site may be related to a regulated landfill that has not been operational since the 1980s. The fire occurred along County Road 2925 in a rural area approximately 1 mile east of Bonham, Fannin County, Texas and approximately 100-yards west of Sloan Creek, a dry intermittent stream. The flow pathway of Sloan Creek continues to Bois D'Arc Creek to the Red River.

According to a local resident, the fire began at approximately 1900 hours when the PRP (landowner) ignited piles of debris that he had staged over the previous five weeks. The PRP informed FOSC Harris that he had set the fire with the permission of the Bonham Fire Department. The fire was initially described to emergency responders as a "controlled-burn brush fire" that contained no hazardous materials.

TCEQ advised that based on a complaint by neighbors they had been scheduled to inspect the site on Wednesday 10/27. The complaint reportedly referenced drums, spilled chemicals, tires and fear on the part of residents of a fire breaking out.

Current Activities

On 24 October 2004, EPA mobilized to investigate the fire, providing air monitoring for combustion products and potential pesticides and to provide written and photographic documentation of response activities. Dodd City Fire Department representatives were on-scene and reported to FOSC Harris that Bonham FD had earlier ordered them off the site due to jurisdictional boundaries. Dodd City apparently was later asked to return with a water tanker to utilize in case of a flare-up during fire suppression activities. Bonham FD arrived on scene after FOSC Harris requested their presence to discuss the origin and management of the incident. Captain Hughes (BFD) advised FOSC Harris that there was no permission given by him or the BFD for the fire to be set.

Approximately 12 residents were evacuated from their homes by the Dodd City Fire Department and sent to a Red Cross Shelter.

TCEQ, as the lead response agency, contracted Eagle Environmental to utilize two local dozers to dismantle, bury and suppress the fire, which START observed to be comprised of brush, tires, rims, cable, building materials, drums of unknown material and scrap metal. Water was not used for fire suppression due to the effectiveness of the bulldozers in the extinguishment of the fires and concerns over runoff to Sloan Creek.

EPA monitored for possible contaminants contained within the northward blowing plume using three Draeger Multiwarns equipped with O2, LEL, H2S, CO, SO2, NO2, Cl2, NH3 and CO2 sensors. EPA also used a TVA-1000 utilizing a flame ionization detector and a photo ionization detector to monitor for volatile organic compounds (VOCs). EPA monitored at multiple locations in adjacent residential neighborhoods with the closest being approximately 700 feet downwind of the fire. No readings above background were detected, though the worst of the fire had subsided prior to initiation of monitoring.

The fire was extinguished at approximately 1020 hours on October 25, 2004, and TCEQ ceased activities at 1030 hours. No soil or materials were removed.

Residents were allowed to return to their homes by late morning.

Planned Removal Actions

Walk out the site with START and TCEQ to determine potential runoff areas or residual materials, particularly drums. EPA contacted a local industry believed to be the original owner of much of the drummed materials. They will visit the site and determine how to recover any material linked to their operation.

Next Steps

TCEQ requested to remain lead agency on site activities. TCEQ OSC Kerlin will revisit the site on October 28, 2004 to sample waste drums, soil and downwind homes. EPA has requested to review and comment on the proposed sampling plan to ensure that all contaminants and areas of concern are addressed.

Key Issues

Approximately 12 residents were evacuated from their homes.

No water was used to extinguish the fire, due to concerns over runoff and ineffectiveness of water on tire fires.

No contaminants were detected while air monitoring downwind areas, although no monitoring was conducted during the initial and worst phase of the fire.

TCEQ left contact information with local residents in order to provide decon capabilities if resident homes were affected by soot from the fire. Several had reported a greasy residue on external surfaces.

response.epa.gov/bonhampesticidefire