

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
Rio Mercury Spill - Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region IV

**Subject:** POLREP #2  
Progress  
Rio Mercury Spill  
B41R  
Bradenton, FL  
Latitude: 27.4696460 Longitude: -82.5942700

**To:** Gwen Keenan, FDEP OER

**From:** Chris Russell, FOSC

**Date:** 5/12/2013

**Reporting Period:** 5/10/2013 - 5/12/2013

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

<b>Site Number:</b>	B41R	<b>Contract Number:</b>	
<b>D.O. Number:</b>		<b>Action Memo Date:</b>	
<b>Response Authority:</b>	CERCLA	<b>Response Type:</b>	Emergency
<b>Response Lead:</b>	EPA	<b>Incident Category:</b>	Removal Action
<b>NPL Status:</b>	Non NPL	<b>Operable Unit:</b>	
<b>Mobilization Date:</b>	5/7/2013	<b>Start Date:</b>	5/7/2013
<b>Demob Date:</b>		<b>Completion Date:</b>	
<b>CERCLIS ID:</b>		<b>RCRIS ID:</b>	
<b>ERNS No.:</b>	1046314	<b>State Notification:</b>	
<b>FPN#:</b>		<b>Reimbursable Account #:</b>	

#### 1.1.1 Incident Category

CERCLA Emergency Response Removal Action.

#### 1.1.2 Site Description

Alchemist lab in a home located in a residential neighborhood with multiple families with children living nearby, as well as an elementary school within 200 yards of the site.

##### 1.1.2.1 Location

3426 32nd street West, Bradenton, Florida.

##### 1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Mercury being released into the environment and possible exposure by nearby residents.

#### 1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

A tenant at 3426 32nd Street West was practicing alchemy utilizing mercury and lead in an effort to produce gold. Upon conducting a search warrant at the site, for unrelated matters, local law enforcement discovered the chemistry lab. On May 7, 2013, Florida Department of Environmental Protection State On-Scene Coordinator Arleo arrived on site to assess the situation. Upon assessing the building, SOSC Arleo discovered mercury levels in the air reaching 100,000 ng/m3. Furthermore, SOSC Arleo discovered elemental mercury in several containers, in the residence, and outside the residence. In turn, FDEP personnel contacted OSC Russell and requested EPA's assistance at the site.

During the evening of May 7, 2013, OSC Russell and SOSC Arleo made an entry into the residence and discovered elevated levels of Mercury vapors in the air, reaching levels of 100,000 ng/m3. Eleven empty one-pound containers of Mercury were noted in the lab on site, as well as several containers of elemental mercury. Elevated levels were discovered outside the home as well.

OSC Russell met with the property owner and advised them of the situation. The property owner advised that they did not have the financial nor technical means to conduct the necessary removal actions. In turn, the property owner and OSC Russell spoke with the Insurance Adjustor for this property and the adjuster advised that the property owner's insurance coverage did not include removal actions related to hazardous substance releases. With no other agencies having the ability to address the removal action, OSC Russell initiated an EPA fund lead emergency response removal action. A signed Access Agreement was received on May 8th (verbal access was provided on May 7th) and a Notice of Federal Interest was provided to the property owner.

## 2. Current Activities

### 2.1 Operations Section

#### 2.1.1 Narrative

Due to the presence of elemental Mercury in the home, lab, and outside the residence, an emergency response removal action was initiated. OSC Russell and SOSC Arleo secured all of the free Mercury during

the evening of May 7th. ERRS (WRS) was mobilized on May 8th to assist with removal operations.

#### **2.1.2 Response Actions to Date**

All of the free elemental Mercury has been properly secured on site. Mercury contaminated materials are being removed and decontamination activities have begun. Due to the extent of contamination inside the home, all of the wood paneling, kitchen counters, flooring, and tile/grout have been removed. ERRS personnel have used floor grinders to remove the tile adhesive located on the floor. Decontamination actions utilizing epsom salt solutions, as well as heating/venting procedures are taking place.

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

The tenant was identified as Mr. Brennan Fountain and is currently under law enforcement custody. The property owner has been identified and contacted as well.

#### **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**

Decontamination activities will continue, including applying solutions, and heating/venting procedures.

#### **2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities**

Continuation of decontamination activities.

#### **2.2.1.2 Next Steps**

### **2.2.2 Issues**

Due to the presence of children in the neighborhood and the nearby school, local interest in the Site has been high. OSC Russell and SOSC Arleo have worked to address the locals' concerns via outreach activities.

Although a progression of invasive response actions have taken place thus far, the Hg vapors present in the air continue to be extremely elevated in the home. The readings the morning of 5/12/2013 were over 50,000 ng/m3 (after the paneling, tile, grout, plumbing, and kitchen counters were removed on Friday and Saturday). Due to the large amount of Hg involved, and the manner by which it was released, it appears that the Hg has infiltrated the concrete structure.

## **2.3 Logistics Section**

Logistics are being coordinated via EPA, ERRS, and FDEP.

## **2.4 Finance Section**

No information available at this time.

## **2.5 Other Command Staff**

### **2.5.1 Safety Officer**

WRS staff have initiated their own Safety Officer.

### **2.5.2 Liaison Officer**

OSC Russell has assumed this duty.

### **2.5.3 Information Officer**

OSC Russell is operating as the Information Officer.

OSC Russell and SOSC Arleo have conducted outreach with adjacent residents, as well as with staff at the nearby Elementary School.

## **3. Participating Entities**

### **3.1 Unified Command**

US EPA, FDEP, and the PRP (property owner).

### **3.2 Cooperating Agencies**

Manatee County Sheriff's Office  
CDC-ATSDR

## **4. Personnel On Site**

US EPA: OSC Russell

FDEP: SOSC Arleo, SOSC Wenner

ERRS: 3 personnel (The # of ERRS on site was reduced to 3 starting May 11th).

## **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.