

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT
Tupelo Ricin Site - Removal Polrep
Initial Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Region IV

Subject: POLREP #1
Initial Polrep-Initiation of Emergency Response
Tupelo Ricin Site
B41T
Tupelo, MS
Latitude: 34.2576066 Longitude: -88.7033859

To: James Webster, EPA Region 4
Barry McMaster, MS DEQ

From: Steve Spurlin, OSC

Date: 6/17/2013

Reporting Period: May 30, 2013 to June 17, 2013

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Site Number:	B41T	Contract Number:	EP-S4-07-03
D.O. Number:	0146	Action Memo Date:	
Response Authority:	CERCLA	Response Type:	Emergency
Response Lead:	EPA	Incident Category:	
NPL Status:	Non NPL	Operable Unit:	
Mobilization Date:	5/30/2013	Start Date:	5/30/2013
Demob Date:		Completion Date:	
CERCLIS ID:	MSN000410978	RCRIS ID:	
ERNS No.:		State Notification:	05/30/2013
FPN#:		Reimbursable Account #:	

1.1.1 Incident Category

This incident is an emergency response to address suspected ricin contamination at two locations in Tupelo, Mississippi.

1.1.2 Site Description

In April 2013, a man living in the Tupelo, MS area is suspected to have sent ricin tainted letters to President Obama and other officials. Two locations in the Tupelo area were tested by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and determined to contain ricin. The locations consist of a karate dojo and a house trailer used for storage. The locations have been secured by FBI and evidence, including ricin tainted items, were collected by the FBI. The FBI is prepared to turn the properties back to current owners. The extent of the remaining ricin contamination is unknown and decontamination of the locations may be required prior to occupancy. The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MS DEQ) referred the sampling and decontamination actions to EPA. The EPA, START contractor, and ERRS contractor mobilized to the site on 5/30/13 to conduct entry into the two locations to conduct a reconnaissance in preparation for the sampling and cleanup actions. Ricin is a toxic protein extracted from the castor bean. Ricin can cause severe respiratory distress and death even at low concentrations and short exposure duration. EPA is coordinating the response with MS DEQ, MS Department of Health, local agencies, and the FBI.

1.1.2.1 Location

The two location consist of a former karate dojo business located at 102 Rankin Road Extended, Tupelo, MS, and a house trailer located at 146 County Road 637, Saltillo, MS.

1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Ricin is a toxic protein extracted from castor beans. Depending on the route of exposure, even small doses of ricin can cause severe respiratory distress, lung damage, and death. The ricin contaminated locations, if not properly decontaminated, would provide potential threat to human health by providing an exposure threat to adults and children who occupy or visit the areas. One location is a former karate business so there is a possibility that the business could be re-opened as a karate business which typically has patrons of varying ages with exposed feet and hands.

1.1.3 Preliminary Removal Assessment/Removal Site Inspection Results

Sample results provided to EPA by the FBI indicated the presence of ricin in certain areas of the karate dojo and on certain items the suspect moved from the dojo to a house trailer.

2. Current Activities

2.1 Operations Section

2.1.1 Narrative

On May 30, 2013, EPA, along with the EPA START contractor and cleanup contractor, mobilized to the Site to begin evaluation and decontamination activities.

2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

Based on information provided by the FBI, the On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) decided to conduct sampling at the trailer location to determine if decontamination was necessary. Information indicated the trailer was used for storage of certain items moved from the dojo to the trailer by the suspect. The majority of the items were removed as evidence by the FBI. A limited number of these items were determined to contain suspected ricin by the FBI and it is not believed the suspect processed the ricin at the trailer.

On May 30, 2013 EPA collected nine samples from various surfaces throughout the trailer. The samples were delivered to the Mississippi Department of Health (DOH) lab in Jackson, TN. Results indicated no ricin. EPA does not anticipate any further actions at the trailer location.

EPA moved to the karate dojo location. It is suspected that the ricin was processed at the dojo based on evidence collected and FBI samples indicating suspected ricin in multiple samples. The OSC decided to decontaminate the dojo with a 10% bleach solution prior to further sampling. The inside of the dojo had bare concrete floors, with walls and other surfaces being open and accessible for decontamination efforts.

The bleach solution was applied with hand sprayers and allowed to dry overnight. EPA collected approximately 30 samples from various surfaces at the dojo. The samples were provided to the DOH lab, and EPA is currently awaiting results.

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

The suspected responsible party is James Everett Dutschke who is currently under Federal indictment.

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

Once the dojo results are finalized, EPA will determine if additional decontamination actions are necessary. If no additional actions required, EPA will coordinate with the DOH, who will be the lead agency for providing the owners with a clearance letter.

2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

2.2.1.2 Next Steps

2.2.2 Issues

2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

2.4 Finance Section

2.4.1 Narrative

An emergency task order was issued to EPA contractor, WRSCcompass. An emergency tasking document was issued to START contractor, Tetrattech.

Estimated Costs *

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
Extramural Costs				
ERRS - Cleanup Contractor	\$50,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$35,000.00	70.00%

TAT/START	\$15,000.00	\$8,000.00	\$7,000.00	46.67%
Intramural Costs				
Total Site Costs	\$65,000.00	\$23,000.00	\$42,000.00	64.62%

* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

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.