

**United States Environmental Protection Agency**  
**Region V**  
**POLLUTION REPORT**

**Date:** Wednesday, December 29, 2004

**From:** Steven Renninger

<b>To:</b>	Linda Nachowicz, EPA	Dave Combs, Ohio EPA
	Dale Farmer, Ohio EPA	Patricia Schultz, EPA
	Kevin Clouse, Ohio EPA	David Chung, EPA
	Charlie Perry, Greater Cincinnati Hazmat	Don Maccarone, Hamilton County
	Bonnie Phillips, City of Cincinnati	Duane Herth, Cincinnati Fire Department
	Dana Stalcup, U.S. EPA	Carol Ropski, U.S. EPA
	Nola Hicks, U.S. EPA	Steven Ostrodka, U.S. EPA
	Afif Marouf, U.S. EPA	Mick Hans, U.S. EPA
	Stuart Hill, U.S. EPA	Ginny Narsete, U.S. EPA
	Tracy Johnson, U.S. EPA	Scott Shane, Ohio EPA
	Rick Schriewer, City of Cincinnati	Marshall Hill, ATF
	Dan Rottmueller, CFD	Dan Wolf, CFD
	Chris Hall, MSD	Distribution List, National Response Center

**Subject:** POLREP #3

Queen City Barrel Fire  
1937 South Street, Cincinnati, OH  
Latitude: 39.1075000  
Longitude: -84.5510000

<b>POLREP No.:</b>	3	<b>Site #:</b>	R5ZZ
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	9/10/04 to 12/13/04	<b>D.O. #:</b>	
<b>Start Date:</b>	8/19/2004	<b>Response Authority:</b>	CERCLA
<b>Mob Date:</b>	8/19/2004	<b>Response Type:</b>	Time-Critical
<b>Demob Date:</b>		<b>NPL Status:</b>	Non NPL
<b>Completion Date:</b>		<b>Incident Category:</b>	Removal Action
<b>CERCLIS ID #:</b>		<b>Contract #</b>	
<b>RCRIS ID #:</b>			

**Site Description**

The Queen City Barrel Response Site consists of a 400,000-square-foot warehouse building at 809 Evans Street in Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Ohio, commonly referred to as the "Lawson Building." E. Paul Corporation owns the Lawson Building. The Site is bordered to the north by Boston Street, to the east by Evans Street, to the south by Whately Street, and the west by Woodrow Street. Queen City Barrel Company (QCB) owns a container reconditioning facility that adjoins the Lawson Building to the north and west. Since at least 1998, QCB has leased the Lawson Building and used it for drum and container storage, fiber drum reconditioning, and equipment and maintenance storage.

On August 19, 2004 at approximately 6:30 p.m., a fire ignited in the Lawson Building. At the time of the fire, the warehouse contained thousands of fiber, plastic, and metal drums and other containers. The fire engulfed the building and blanketed the heavily industrial area west of Interstate 75 in heavy smoke. Explosions were heard every few minutes from inside the building, which began to collapse at 9:20 p.m. on August 19, 2004. More than 20 Cincinnati-area fire departments responded to the fire. By August 20, 2004, 10 fire companies remained on-site to contain the fire.

On August 19-20, 2004, at the request of the Cincinnati Health Department, the U.S. EPA performed downwind air monitoring east of the fire. U.S. EPA air monitoring teams were part of the Cincinnati Chemical Air Monitoring (CAM) team deployed to the fire to determine the extent of airborne contaminants released during the fire. Based on the CAM Team monitoring, the Cincinnati Health Department recommended "shelter in place" for downwind residents on August 19, 2004. CAM Team air samples were laboratory analyzed and detected the following chemicals in the downwind plume: acetone, 2-butanone (methyl ethyl ketone), benzene, toluene, and xylene.

On August 20, 2004, at the request of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms (ATF) and the

Cincinnati Fire Department (CFD), the U.S. EPA conducted air sampling on Whately Street immediately adjacent to the Lawson Building where the fire was smoldering. Two summa canister samples were collected and sent to a local laboratory for analysis. The following chemicals were detected in the Whately Street smoke plume: acetone, 2-butanone (methyl ethyl ketone), tetrahydrofuran, heptane, benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, styrene, and xylene. During the August 20, 2004, U.S. EPA sampling investigation, the U.S. EPA's On Scene Coordinator (OSC) Steven Renninger observed numerous drums (>1,000) in areas inside and outside of the Lawson Building. Drums were noted to be burned, partially burned, and in varying stages of deterioration due to the fire, which was still smoldering. OSC Renninger observed drums within the fire area, as well as in other parts of the building that were immediately adjacent to the fire areas. Drums were stacked three high in several areas of the building's upper level, as observed from Evans and Whately Streets.

On August 20, 2004, the City of Cincinnati, Department of Buildings and Inspections (B&I) issued a notice of violation and order pursuant to the Cincinnati Building Code. The City ordered demolition of the Lawson Building located at 809 Evans Street, and declared it to be a public nuisance.

On August 24, 2004, the U.S. EPA sampled two drums located adjacent to the fire area. The drums were located in Whately Street as a result of the fire at 809 Evans Street. One of the drums was in deteriorated condition (bulging) at the time of sampling. Laboratory results indicated that the sample denoted as QCB1 was corrosive with a pH=2.2.

### **Current Activities**

Phase I activities were completed and implemented at the QCB site by October 1, 2004. These activities included establishing a drum storage area, identifying the priority demolition areas of the Lawson Building, identifying key personnel, and generating site health and safety plans. Phase II activities, drum removal and building demolition, are on-going. The Removal Work Plan was submitted to U.S. EPA on November 2, 2004 and approved on November 9, 2004. An AOC was signed by QCB on November 22, 2004. The AOC requires QCB to remove all drums from the Lawson Building for proper disposal. Following the drum removal, building demolition will be completed pursuant to the City of Cincinnati order. The Removal Work Plan schedule requires drum removal work to be completed by March 25, 2005.

Allgeier & Son Inc. (Allgeier) was identified as the demolition contractor by QCB. Allgeier worked with City of Cincinnati building inspectors to identify priority demolition areas in order to allow fire investigation and drum removal activities to proceed. Drum removal activities started in the basement of Building B-1 on September 30, 2004. CFD began the fire investigation in Building areas B-2 and B-3 on October 20, 2004. Allgeier provided demolition support to the CFD investigation and continued demolition in other areas of the Lawson Building. Allgeier continues to perform demolition and drum removal work.

Environmental Engineering, Inc. (EEI) personnel, subcontractor to CEC, replaced Clean Harbors and have undertaken drum removal and hazard categorization activities. A concrete drum staging pad was established east of Area B1 on Evans Street. EEI began removing drums from the basement for Building B-1 and then staging them for sampling. EEI personnel are sampling non-empty drums and the samples are being haz-catted on-site for disposal. After the waste has been categorized, contents of drums are containerized into placarded, 300-gallon totes designated for specific waste categories. Waste streams that have currently been identified at the QCB site include flammable liquids, corrosive (acid) liquids, corrosive (base) liquids, flammable/corrosive liquids, non-hazardous liquids, non-hazardous solids, oxidizer liquids, cyanides, sulfides, chlorinated liquids, flammable solids, and hazardous waste (over-packed drums).

Runoff from the drum staging pad is pumped into a sump and later containerized in designated totes to prevent off-site contamination. Queen City Barrel's water treatment facility is treating the non-hazardous liquids from the drum staging area. EEI continued drum removal in the basement of B-1 from September 30, 2004 to November 23, 2004. During the week of November 23, 2004, drum removal activities shifted to the 3rd floor of Building B-1. Allgeier is removing the drums from the 3rd floor and delivering them the drum staging area for processing by EEI.

CEC continues oversight of the drum removal activities for QCB. CEC is conducting daily air monitoring on the perimeter of the site and in the work area, currently the third floor of Area B-1.

The CFD completed the majority of the fire investigation in the Lawson Building on December 13, 2004. CFD no longer required Cincinnati Police to provide 24-hr site security. On December 13, 2004, QCB installed fencing and barricades around the fire scene since Cincinnati Police are no longer on-

site. Private security is present on-site during non-working hours. Evans Street remains closed to traffic. The Cincinnati Fire Department has been periodically on-site continuing the fire investigation.

As of December 20, a total of 18,496 empty drums had been removed from the Lawson Building; 8,058 empty drums were removed from Area B-1. A total of 4,046 non-empty drums had been removed from the demolition areas.

#### **Planned Removal Actions**

-Continue removal of drums from Building B-1. The 3rd floor will be completed first, then the 1st and 2nd floors before returning to the basement. B-1 is estimated to be completed by the end of March 2005.

-The transformers in the basement of B-2 will be drained and removed. EEI will dispose of the oil from the transformers and Cinergy will dispose of the transformers.

-Once all drums/containers have been removed from B-1, drum removal and haz-cating activities will move to Building B-5 and B-6. An estimated 4,000 drums remain in Building B-5.

#### **Key Issues**

The site IMT, consisting of EPA, START, CFD, City of Cincinnati Building and Inspections, QCB and QCB contractors, continue to meet twice a week. Updates on site security, safety, building demolition, air monitoring, drum removal, fire investigation, and facility issues are discussed at these meetings.

#### **Disposition of Wastes**

<b>Waste Stream</b>	<b>Quantity</b>	<b>Manifest #</b>	<b>Disposal Facility</b>
Flammable Liquids	695 gallons		EEI
Flammable Solids	12 drums		EEI
Corrosive Liquids / Acid	343 gallons		EEI
Corrosive Liquids / Base	20 gallons		EEI
Oxidizer Liquids	30 gallons		EEI
Sulfides	250 gallons		EEI
Non-Hazardous Liquids	1,575 gallons		QCB Wastewater Treatment Plant
Special Waste (Hazardous)	5 overpacks		EEI

[response.epa.gov/queencitybarrel](http://response.epa.gov/queencitybarrel)