

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
Hood Mercury Response - Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region VI

**Subject:** POLREP #3  
3/24/2014 - 3/27/2014  
Hood Mercury Response  
  
Odessa, TX  
Latitude: 31.8825701 Longitude: -102.3758878

**To:**  
**From:** Mike McAteer, OSC  
**Date:** 3/7/2014  
**Reporting Period:** Progress

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background

<b>Site Number:</b>	<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> PRP	<b>Incident Category:</b> Removal Action
<b>NPL Status:</b> Non NPL	<b>Operable Unit:</b>
<b>Mobilization Date:</b> 3/20/2014	<b>Start Date:</b> 3/20/2014
<b>Demob Date:</b>	<b>Completion Date:</b>
<b>CERCLIS ID:</b>	<b>RCRIS ID:</b>
<b>ERNS No.:</b>	<b>State Notification:</b>
<b>FPN#:</b>	<b>Reimbursable Account #:</b>

#### 1.1.1 Incident Category

Release of hazardous substance (elemental mercury) inside a school

#### 1.1.2 Site Description

##### 1.1.2.1 Location

Hood Junior High School - 601 E. 38th Street, Odessa, Texas 79762

##### 1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

EPA Region 6 was contacted by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) as well as the Texas Department of State Health Services on March 18, 2014, regarding a release of approximately 1 liquid ounce of elemental mercury inside Hood Junior High School in Odessa, Texas.

Early reports on the release indicated that a student found the mercury in a bottle near the school and he brought it inside the school where he shared it with other classmates. Once school administrators recognized that the students were playing with mercury, the exposed students were isolated from the rest of the students then sent by school bus to two local hospitals.

The school district has hired local hazmat contractors to conduct a cleanup of the school. Early assessment activities conducted appear to indicate that the contamination is limited to two classrooms and the cafeteria.

An EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) as well as two START personnel mobilized to the school on March 20th to provide assistance to the school district and the Ector County Health District.

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

## 2. Current Activities

### 2.1 Operations Section

### 2.1.1 Narrative

Upon arrival, EPA met with Ector County Independent School District (ECISD) officials and their contractors to evaluate response actions to date. Allied International Emergency and CTEH have been contracted by ECISD to remediate Hood Junior High School. While clean-up activities are ongoing, students are attending class at the nearby Technical High School. EPA continues to conduct oversight and further investigate any possible spread of the mercury into the surrounding community by students who were potentially exposed.

### 2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

Contractors for ECISD continue clean up activities. All flooring has been removed and will be replaced in the cafeteria to provide a clean surface for returning students.

A complete assessment of the school using the "activity based" method is ongoing. This method monitors the headspace (mercury vapors released) of recovered shoe covers after personnel walk in the area of concern for ten minutes to simulate student potential activities.

The test application, removal and re-testing of one of the classrooms utilizing a chelation polymer gel will be completed today. Further decisions regarding final decontamination of floor surfaces will depend on the effectiveness of this process vs. the more traditional sulfur based products.

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

#### 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

ECISD Contractors will continue to remediate affected areas using mercury binding agents in efforts to prevent cross-contamination of affected surfaces onto the shoes and clothing of returning students.

Activity based monitoring continues. Test is designed to represent the normal activities of students in the school to establish the risk of cross contamination and possible spread of any remaining mercury. This monitoring has been expanded to include all areas of the school after initial results indicated contamination of floors outside the area concern.

#### 2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

CTEH has assumed the role as the prime clean-up contractor for ECISD. A total of 50 plus contractor employees are on site performing evaluation and remediation activities.

#### 2.2.1.2 Next Steps

EPA will continue to coordinate with officials from the Ector County Independent School District to ensure proper remediation of Hood Junior High School.

#### 2.2.2 Issues

## 2.3 Logistics Section

No information available at this time.

## 2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

## 2.5 Other Command Staff

No information available at this time.

## 3. Participating Entities

### 3.1 Unified Command

### **3.2 Cooperating Agencies**

Ector County Independent School District

Ector County Health Department

Texas Department of State Health Services

TCEQ - Midland District

U.S. EPA

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

Weston Solutions, Inc.

Allied International Emergency Services

Center for Toxicology and Environmental Health, LLC (CTEH)

### **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.