

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
Sandersville Derailment - Removal Polrep  
Final Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region IV

**Subject:** **POLREP #2**  
**Final POLREP**  
**Sandersville Derailment**

**Sandersville, GA**  
**Latitude: 32.9513500 Longitude: -82.7252050**

**To:**

**From:** Brian Englert, OSC

**Date:** 9/1/2015

**Reporting Period:** 8/10/2015 - 8/27/2015

## 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> OPA	<b>Response Type:</b> Emergency
<b>Response Lead:</b> PRP	<b>Incident Category:</b> Removal Action
<b>NPL Status:</b> NPL	<b>Operable Unit:</b>
<b>Mobilization Date:</b> 8/7/2015	<b>Start Date:</b> 8/7/2015
<b>Demob Date:</b> 8/10/2015	<b>Completion Date:</b> 9/14/2015
<b>CERCLIS ID:</b>	<b>RCRIS ID:</b>
<b>ERNS No.:</b> 1125018	<b>State Notification:</b>
<b>FPN#:</b> E15442	<b>Reimbursable Account #:</b>

#### 1.1.1 Incident Category

The incident is an emergency response to a train derailment.

#### 1.1.2 Site Description

The Site is the location of a train derailment in a rural area.

##### 1.1.2.1 Location

The Site is located in Sandersville, GA near the intersection of Sunhill Grange Road and Sunhill Road. The Site's latitude and longitude are: 32.9513500 and -82.7252050.

##### 1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Two trains collided head on resulting in release of diesel fuel.

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

At 13:30 local time on August 7th, two Norfolk Southern trains collided in a head-on collision in Sandersville, GA (NRC Report 1125018). Initial reports indicate there had been a head on collision with three engines and an unconfirmed number of intermodal cars derailed. The trains were carrying no hazardous substances but had approximately 10,800 gallons of diesel fuel on board. It has been confirmed that the fuel tanks on at least two of the engines are actively leaking. It is unknown at this time if the third engine's fuel tank has been breached. Sun Hill Creek is approximately 700 feet from the collision and one of its tributaries is approximately 200 feet from the collision. Drainage ditches on both the north and south sides of the tracks flow to tributaries of Sun Hill Creek. These tributaries are between 200 and 400 from the collision. Sun Hill Creek and its tributaries flow into Williamson Swamp Creek which flows into Ogeechee River. Initial assessments indicate that fuel was released onto the ballast and into drainage ditches on both sides of the tracks. Boom has been deployed, but fuel can be heard leaking from at least two of the three derailed engines.

## 2. Current Activities

## **2.1 Operations Section**

### **2.1.1 Narrative**

#### **August 7th**

At approximately 13:30 local time, two Norfolk Southern locomotives collided in a head-on collision in Sandersville GA near the intersection of Sun Hill Grange Rd and Sun Hill Road (NRC Report 1125018). The collision involved Norfolk Southern train #208, heading from Atlanta GA to Savannah GA, out of Atlanta, Georgia that was headed to Savannah, Georgia, and a local train hauling wood chips and scrap metal.

Three engines and an unconfirmed number of intermodal cars derailed. The trains were carrying no hazardous substances but had approximately 10,800 gallons of diesel fuel on board. There are reports of fuel releasing from the engines involved in the collision. OSC Englert mobilized to the Site on the evening of August 7th and integrated into unified command with Norfolk Southern and GA EPD and conducted a Site assessment.

On the evening of August 7th it was confirmed that the fuel tanks on at least two of the locomotives had been breached. It is unknown at this time if the third engine's fuel tank has been breached. Sun Hill Creek is approximately 700 feet from the collision and is not impacted at this time. The majority of released fuel has leaked onto the ballast on both sides of the tracks and is contained in adjacent soil which is not accessible to vac truck due to the surrounding wreckage.

#### **August 8th**

Wrecking crews worked through the night to clear the tracks of derailed cars. The majority of wreckage was cleared by the morning of August 8th and it is anticipated that the rail line will be operational on the evening of August 8th. Vac trucks attempting to access the standing fuel were unable to do so from a nearby road. Norfolk Southern plans to build additional roads on the north and south side of the tracks to bring heavy equipment and vac trucks closer to the impacted soil. Test pits have been dug to confirm placement of interceptor trenches that will be installed in the evening of August 8th to allow diesel fuel to be collected.

#### **August 9th**

Approximately 150 to 200 gallons of diesel have been recovered from recovery trenches on the north side of the tracks. Little to no diesel has been recovered from trenches on the south side of the track. It was initially believed, that due to the sandy nature of the soil, diesel may have sank on the south side of the tracks but the absence of diesel in the trench and in ground water suggests the possibility that diesel may have traveled over land and into the forested area which is still heavily impacted by debris from the derailment. Additional wrecking has confirmed the presence of diesel beneath debris located in this area, however further wrecking and disposal of debris is required before this area can be made accessible and additional recovery trenches installed. It is anticipated that work on these additional recovery trenches will begin in the next operational period.

All remaining fuel has been drained from all engines and it is estimated that approximately 6,000 gallons of diesel were released between the north and south side of the tracks. Norfolk Southern has drafted an Operations and Maintenance Plan which has been approved by Unified Command.

#### **August 10th**

Additional wrecking allowed Norfolk Southern contractors to finish installing recovery trenches to the south of the derailment. Additional recovery trenches were also excavated to the north of the derailment. Oversight is transitioning to GA EPD. Due to the small amount of diesel recovered to date, these trenches will need to be monitored on an ongoing basis and additional excavation of impacted soil performed.

OSC Englert has discussed recovery and disposal of diesel and impacted soil with GA EPD and will transition oversight to GA EPD. Norfolk Southern will continue to provide ICS 201 forms to Unified Command members on an ongoing basis. OSC Englert demobilized in the afternoon of August 10th.

#### **August 10th through August 27th**

Norfolk Southern Contractors continue to provide ICS 201 forms to members of Unified Command on a weekly basis and after milestone events. Onsite contractors continued to maintain trenches to observe potential seepage of free product and/or facilitate recovery while also visually inspecting nearby Sun Hill Creek for evidence of impacts (i.e. sheen events).

Removal and disposal of the significant amount of C&D materials has been ongoing through this reporting period and has facilitated access to suspected diesel impacted areas. Contractors are utilizing tarps to cover ground surface over suspected impacted soil areas during potential rain events as appropriate and managing precipitation accumulation in trenches and soil excavation areas.

Following removal of debris, contractors have begun excavating diesel fuel impacted soils into roll offs for disposal during future operational periods. Soils in excavation pits are being tested with a photo ionization detector (PID) for the presence of fuel impacts. Readings <50 ppm will be considered clean. Excavation pits are being filled with clean backfill once impacted soils have been removed. Restoration of adjacent property damaged by derailment clearing operations will take place once other activities are complete. Oversight has completely transitioned to GA EPD.

#### **August 27th through September 14th**

Norfolk Southern has continued to provide ICS 201 forms to members of Unified Command on a weekly basis and after milestone events. Restoration of adjacent properties damaged by the derailment and during construction of roads is proceeding. To date, 1250.92 tons of C&D waste and 2864.47 tons of impacted soil have been disposed of at the Wolf Creek Landfill in Dry Branch, GA.

### 2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

Contractors and equipment have been mobilized to the Site

Boom has been deployed

Wrecking operations have begun

Remaining fuel has been pumped from locomotives

Construction of roads on north and south sides of tracks has begun

Recovery trenches have been dug on the north and south sides of the track

Additional wreckage is being removed to access contaminated soil and dig additional recovery trenches south of wreckage

An O&M Plan has been approved by Unified Command

Oversight has been transitioned to GA EPD

OSC Englert has demobilized

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

Enforcement activities have been initiated and are ongoing. Norfolk Southern has been identified as a Potentially Responsible Party (PRP).

### 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

Additional roads will be built,

Additional wrecking will take place to clear debris south of the tracks,

Recovery trenches will be maintained and monitored for product

Product will be recovered if found in recovery trenches

Additional diesel and diesel impacted soil will be excavated, staged and disposed of

Site restoration will take place following removal activities

#### 2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

Additional roads will be built,

Additional wrecking will take place to clear debris south of the tracks,

Recovery trenches will be maintained and monitored for product

Product will be recovered if found in recovery trenches

Additional diesel and diesel impacted soil will be excavated, staged and disposed of

Site restoration will take place following removal 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**

No information available at this time.

### **2.5 Other Command Staff**

No information available at this time.

## **3. Participating Entities**

### **3.1 Unified Command**

EPA, GA EPD and Norfolk Southern

### **3.2 Cooperating Agencies**

Local law enforcement

## **4. Personnel On Site**

EPA OSC

GA EPD

Norfolk Southern

HEPACO Hazmat Team

Geo Syntec

B&P

Hulcher Wrecking Team

## **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.