

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
POLLUTION/SITUATION REPORT  
Valley Fire Response - Removal Polrep



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
Region IX

**Subject:** POLREP #14  
Progress  
Valley Fire Response

Middletown, CA  
Latitude: 38.7526718 Longitude: -122.6265309

**To:** Bret Moxley, EPA Region 9  
Randy Nattis, EPA Region 9

**From:** Bret Moxley, On Scene Coordinator

**Date:** 10/28/2015

**Reporting Period:** 0730 10/27/15 - 0730 10/28/15

## 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> Stafford Act	<b>Response Type:</b> Emergency
<b>Response Lead:</b> FEMA	<b>Incident Category:</b> Removal Action
<b>NPL Status:</b>	<b>Operable Unit:</b>
<b>Mobilization Date:</b>	<b>Start Date:</b>
<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

Stafford Act

#### 1.1.2 Site Description

On 12 September 2015 at 1324 the Valley Fire began in Lake County CA, primarily impacting the communities of Middletown, Hidden Valley Lake, and Cobb. The fire covered 76,067 acres and 1,958 structures were destroyed, including 1,280 residences, 27 multi-family buildings, 66 commercial buildings, and 585 out buildings. 93 structures sustained damage including 41 residences, 7 commercial buildings, and 45 minor structures.

On 27 September 2015, the Governor of California, Edmund G. Brown Jr., issued Executive Order B-33-15, to initiate cleanup of burnt debris and ash in Lake County as a result of wildfires. The Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery (CalRecycle) has been assigned to manage the removal and proper disposal of the solid waste and debris left over from the fires in Lake and Napa Counties.

On 28 September 2015, using Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) authority, United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) EPA Region 9 On Scene Coordinators (OSCs) with the support of START contractors began clearing properties of household waste (HHW) and perform air and radiation monitoring.

On 3 October 2015, the US Environmental Protection Agency received two Mission Assignments from FEMA under ESF-10:

- 1) For activation and provision of a Debris Management SME for HHW planning (\$50,000);
- 2) Direct Federal Assistance (DFA) to collect, stage and dispose of HHW (\$3,500,000).

United States EPA has been tasked to manage the categorization, removal, and appropriate disposal of HHW and orphaned containers at properties with destroyed residential structures within the Valley Fire boundary in Lake County. EPA will coordinate with State and Local agencies to facilitate all operations supporting the Valley Fire Response.

##### 1.1.2.1 Location

#### 1.1.2.2 Description of Threat

Each day, U.S EPA contractors' Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) and Emergency and Rapid Response Services (ERRS) crews deploy to 5 Divisions (Divs A-E) in Lake County and assess only those structures where right-of-entry is permitted. Properties are documented and HHW assessment activities are performed, including air and radiation monitoring and asbestos testing for H&S proposes when appropriate. Orphan containers such as pressurized cylinders are evaluated, collected and transported to the staging area. After assessment and documentation, properties are released to CalRecycle for remedial operations.

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

On 28 September, at the State's request and under CERCLA authority, EPA Region 9 OSCs (without contractor support) began clearing 33 properties of HHW and orphan containers near public schools to minimize risk to school children and so that California's debris management teams could scrape the structure pads and prepare them for recovery. A total of 47 bulk asbestos samples were collected at 18 properties to identify the presence of respirable asbestos to protect response personnel.

Following the initial HHW recovery efforts, at the State's request and under CERCLA authority, EPA Region 9 OSCs with the support of EPA START Contractors continued the process of clearing properties of HHW and orphan containers from priority locations within the Valley Fire boundary. A total of 1162 parcels with significantly damaged structures were identified using structural damage assessment data from Lake County.

#### 1.1.4 Command Objectives

- Ensure the safety of response personnel and the public.
- Minimize economic impact by ensuring costs commensurate to tactical objectives.
- Operate all activities with respect for residents and the community.
- Maintain situational awareness through a systemic and planned process for tasking, collecting, processing, analyzing, and disseminating information.
- Keep public and stakeholders informed by providing an accurate and timely release of incident information.
- Manage a coordinated inter-agency response effort.
- Identify, characterize, and recover all household hazardous waste to include pressurized containers.
- Ensure disposal of recovered HHW appropriately.
- Identify areas with asbestos and collect samples accordingly for health and safety purposes of field operators.
- Maintain site security and situational awareness at all times.
- Establish an informational transfer process to facilitate communications with stakeholders and organizations.

#### 1.1.5 Command Emphasis

- Ensure proper PPE at all times including respirator.
- Follow work/rest ratio.
- Stay hydrated
- Prepare for large temperature swings from the 40's to the 80's on most days
- Watch for citizens and families as you work since these areas are not closed off to the public.
- Watch for slips trips and falls, nails, and sharp objects that could be buried under ash.
- Have an SOP in place for possible radiation sources. **\*REMEMBER SMAC\* STOP - MOVE AWAY - ALERT - CLOSE OFF**
- **Do NOT pick up or take anything that is not characterized as a HHW product. These are peoples belongings!**

## 2. Current Activities

### 2.1 Operations Section

#### 2.1.1 Narrative

Lake County, largely affected by the wildfire, is located east of Mendocino County, north of Napa Valley. The areas exhibiting the greatest extent of fire damage to structures include the communities of Cobb, Middletown, and Hidden Valley Lake. Parts of northern Napa County and eastern Sonoma County were also affected, resulting in a total area of 76,067 acres burned. Middletown California marks the location of CalRecycle's Disaster Recovery Operations Center (DROC).

United States EPA (EPA) has been tasked to manage the categorization, removal, and appropriate disposal of HHW and orphaned containers at properties with destroyed residential structures within the Valley Fire boundary in Lake County. EPA will coordinate with State and Local agencies to facilitate all operations supporting the Valley Fire Response.

#### 2.1.2 Response Actions to Date

During this operational period:

U.S. EPA implemented 3 HHW task forces and 1 survey team consisting of an EPA OSC, START and

ERRS contractors, and a Lake County liaison. The three task forces covered three target areas: Hidden Valley Lake, Cobb, and Middletown. Each task force conducts an air and radiological monitoring evaluation. Once completed, the HHW characterization and removal process commences. During this process, if any cylinders are determined to be of suspect condition for transport and or should still have a payload, the cylinders marked and START identifies the property in the GIS.

EPA's high hazard team has started to evaluate high pressure cylinders that have been collected and staged to date. Additionally, collaborating with GIS and situations, the high hazard team has evaluated and cleared **101** sites identified by the HHW task forces as having target cylinder(s).

USCG Pacific Strike Team members have been coordinating field activities in the ICP and providing site safety.

*See below for most current HHW item counts and property assessments.*

### 2.1.3 Progress Metrics

Valley Fire Daily Totals	
DATE	CLEARED PROPERTIES
30 SEP	1
2 OCT	3
8 OCT	12
9 OCT	8
12 OCT	12
13 OCT	23
14 OCT	29
15 OCT	49
16 OCT	29
19 OCT	73
20 OCT	46
21 OCT	52
22 OCT	86
23 OCT	85
24 OCT	18
26 OCT	96
27 OCT	58
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>680</b>

Valley Fire Incident Totals			
Total Properties*	Properties Remaining*	Percentage Complete*	HHW Characterization
1034	354	66%	680

*\*These numbers fluctuate daily due to ROE granted or revoked.*

Valley Fire HHW Item Counts with Cumulative Total						
	Non-RCRA Solid	Paint-Related Material	Propane	Aerosols	Thick Walled Cylinders	Empty Cont. Disposed as scrap
9 OCT	281	46	120	190	5	143

<b>12 OCT</b>	0 (u)	130	13	241	0	25
<b>13 OCT</b>	195	109	39	488	1	20
<b>14 OCT</b>	492	105	90	546	0 (u)	2
<b>15 OCT</b>	480	228	111	811	16	163
<b>16 OCT</b>	700	151	209	514	10	117
<b>19 OCT</b>	663	50	168	710	31	135
<b>20 OCT</b>	471	43	151	565	7	152
<b>21 OCT</b>	635	13	137	623	13	136
<b>22 OCT</b>	339	43	324	841	6	230
<b>23 OCT</b>	148	13	95	368	19	266
<b>26 OCT</b>	114	13	212	396	23	273
<b>27 OCT</b>	105	23	42	338	13	77
<b>TOTAL</b>	4,623	967	1,711	6631	144	1,739

## 2.2 Planning Section

### 2.2.1 Anticipated Activities

To date, the GIS and data team has identified **1034** total properties that are targeted for HHW assessment and removal activities. This number is determined by the County as those properties where Right-of-Entry (ROE) is granted by the homeowner.

Crews consisting of ERRS and START contractors deploy daily to areas within the Valley Fire boundary in Lake County which has been subdivided into five divisions; from southeast to northwest - Division A, B, C, D, and E. Targeted areas are determined in conjunction with CalRecycle and the County of Lake, focusing only on properties where the owner has granted Right-of-Entry. Once a property has progressed through Site Documentation and HHW Assessment activities, including air and radiation monitoring and asbestos testing, CalRecycle proceeds with remedial operations.

#### 2.2.1.1 Planned Response Activities

U.S EPA continues to run 3 HHW task forces that began October 13, and added a survey team that identifies sites in conjunction with Cal Recycle. Each HHW task force consists of an EPA OSC, START and ERRS contractors, and a Lake County liaison. EPA's high hazard team continues to provide assessments on target cylinders in the field and staging area as necessary.

The three task forces cover three target areas daily: Hidden Valley Lake, Cobb, and Middletown.

USCG Pacific Strike Team members have been coordinating field activities in the ICP accordingly and providing site safety.

#### 2.2.1.2 Next Steps

Major operations at The Valley Fire response began last week to include the high hazard team.

#### 2.2.2 Potential Issues

The OSC may require heavy equipment such as cylinder coffins which may be hard to obtain.

Record high heat requires multiple breaks for hydration leading to slower clean-up efforts.

- **EPA START arborist identified several trees (39) that need to be removed off multiple properties before work commences.**

## 2.3 Logistics Section

1. Possibility of adding additional START contractors to supplement the additional task forces.
2. Possibility of adding additional ERRS resources for extraction of the high hazards - heavy equipment
3. Obtaining a cylinder coffin.

## 2.4 Finance Section

No information available at this time.

## 2.5 Other Command Staff

### 2.5.1 Safety Officer

USCG Pacific Strike Team (2)

### 2.5.2 Liaison Officer

Lake County Public Health (3)

### 2.5.3 Information Officer

### 2.5.4 Community Involvement Coordinator

The Community Involvement Coordinator (CIC) has worked closely with the County, CalRecycle, and CalOES to improve inter-agency communications and better serve the needs of the impacted community. Main issues in the community are focused on misinformation regarding debris cleanup procedures, insurance claims, looting, and fraud. A central concern is the legitimacy of the crews in the field, as property owners are wary of the several different agencies and contractors on site. To address this issue, EPA created a flier ("Who's On My Property?") in collaboration with the County, CalRecycle and CalOES. The flier explains the steps to the cleanup process and provides community members a way to match the agency logo to the crew on their property on the spot. The fliers have been widely distributed; each crew has a stack of them to give out and a laminated version to stay with the crew foreman, and there are poster-sized versions at all the grocery stores in Cobb, Middletown and Hidden Valley as well as at the casino and the Local Assistance Center. The flier was also distributed on the County OES Facebook page, Twitter page, and information website.

Local tribal officials and concerned property owners have been contacted to improve communication and stifle widespread misinformation. In coordination with CalRecycle and OES, a public meeting about debris cleanup occurred on Thursday, October 16th to address these concerns.

## 3. Participating Entities

### 3.1 Cooperating Agencies

- United States EPA - Region XI
- United States Coast Guard - Pacific Strike Team
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)
- State of California (CalRecycle, CalOES, DFW OSPR)
- County of Lake
- EPA START
- EPA ERRS
- ARCADIS

## 4. Personnel On Site

### Personnel Involved

EPA IC – Brett Moxley

Valley Fire Personnel on Site									
	EPA	USCG	START	ERRS					TOTAL
				EQM	GLOBAL	SW HAZARD	AROTEK	STERICYCLE	
10/9	2	3	5	18					28
10/12	4	5	12	22					43
10/13	6	5	13	8	7	4	12	5	60
10/14	6	5	14	8	7	4	12	5	61
10/15	5	5	16	8	7	4	12	5	62
10/16	4	5	16	8	7	4	12	5	61
10/19	4	5	15	8	7	4	12	5	60
10/20	5	4	15	8	7	4	12	5	60
10/21	6	4	15	8	7	4	12	5	61

10/22	6	4	15	8	7	4	12	5	61
10/23	5	5	15	8	7	4	12	5	61
10/24	5	5	15	8	7	4	12	5	61
10/26	5	4	15	8	7	4	12	5	61
10/27	5	6	15	8	7	4	12	5	62

**VIP Visits:**

**5. Definition of Terms**

No information available at this time.

**6. Additional sources of information**

**6.1 Internet location of additional information/report:**

For more information, refer to [www.epaosc.org/ValleyFireResponse](http://www.epaosc.org/ValleyFireResponse)

**7. Situational Reference Materials**

**Extended Forecast:**

Tuesday – Low of 55 / High of 72, Mostly Cloudy, Winds: 3mph out of the West

Wednesday – Low of 47 / High of 68, Light a.m. rain, clearing in the p.m., Winds: 5mph out of the North

Thursday – Low of 42 / High of 77, Sunny, Winds: 6mph out of the Northwest

Friday – Low of 50 / High of 84, Sunny, Winds: 4mph out of the Southeast

The Incident Action Plans (IAPs) will be posted [www.epaosc.org/ValleyFireResponse](http://www.epaosc.org/ValleyFireResponse) in the document section for reference.