

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

**Date:** Monday, May 1, 2006

**From:** Anthony Barber

**To:** Chris Field, EPA Region 10 (POLREP List)

**Subject:** Timberline High School Mercury Response  
1150 Highway 11, Weippe, ID  
Latitude: 46.4355600  
Longitude: -115.8866700

<b>POLREP No.:</b>	2	<b>Site #:</b>	10ZZ
<b>Reporting Period:</b>	4/30/2006	<b>D.O. #:</b>	
<b>Start Date:</b>	4/27/2006	<b>Response Authority:</b>	CERCLA
<b>Mob Date:</b>	4/27/2006	<b>Response Type:</b>	Emergency
<b>Demob Date:</b>		<b>NPL Status:</b>	Non NPL
<b>Completion Date:</b>		<b>Incident Category:</b>	Removal Assessment
<b>CERCLIS ID #:</b>		<b>Contract #</b>	
<b>RCRIS ID #:</b>			

#### **Site Description**

On Thursday, April 27th at approximately 5:30PM Region 10's Emergency Response Duty officer was contacted by Idaho Communications Center and informed of a mercury spill in Timberline High School located in Weippe Idaho. Weippe is a small rural community located in Clearwater County in North-central Idaho app 200 miles north of Boise. According to the Clearwater County Sheriff's office several teenage boys were caught playing with and spilling mercury from one of the school's classrooms. School staff were not able to completely clean up the material, and the responding Sheriff's department officials had concerns over remaining contamination and risks to the health of students and school staff. The school complex which contains an approximate 20 classroom high school and a 4 room junior high school was scheduled to be closed Friday and throughout the weekend. Based upon the reported situation and the lack of locally available technical assistance to assess the suspected contamination EPA dispatched an OSC and 4 START personnel with emergency response equipment including mercury vapor detection and air monitoring devices.

#### **Current Activities**

Assessment of Hg levels continued throughout day. A Hg vacuum was obtained and used in several places, including the junior high boys' bathroom to remove Hg. Lime was used in other areas. Lockers were opened and a small amount of Hg was found and removed from 2 of them. Sink drain traps in the junior high boys' bathroom and classroom A4 were checked. about one ounce of Hg was recovered from one of the bathroom drain traps. Ventilation of the high school was completed and air samples were collected for laboratory analysis. Items previously removed from classroom A4 continued to be screened for Hg and released when possible. A debris management area was established behind a secure fenced area.

#### **Planned Removal Actions**

EPA will continue to assist local responders by assessing extent and degree of contamination at the school. Confirmation sampling in the school buildings will need to take place before demob. No outstanding requests to screen homes are now pending.

#### **Next Steps**

Ventilation of the junior high building is expected to be complete on Monday, allowing final air sampling to take place. Shipment of all air samples should also occur on Monday. Arrangement for disposal of "product" mercury and bagged debris that is lightly contaminated with mercury will also occur on Monday, with actual pickup for disposal happening at a later date. The EPA and START expect to demob from the site at about 4 PM Monday, with return trips later as necessary.

#### **Key Issues**

Good cooperation from all levels of government continues to facilitate the response. Press and media

interest has been low; there was a small article in the Lewiston Tribune and an interview of Sheriff's Dept. personnel on a local radio station. Local County Health Officials tentatively plan to address risk communication issues with school staff and students, however EPA Regional PIO has been placed on standby should the need for federal assistance arise next week. A criminal investigation is underway and 3 teenage students of the school have been charged with at least one criminal count regarding this incident.

[response.epa.gov/TimberlineHighHg](https://response.epa.gov/TimberlineHighHg)