

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Thursday, May 25, 2006

From: Chris Russell

Subject: Oak Grove Elementary Mercury Spill
Oak Grove Elementary Mercury Spill
3801 Wake Forest Hwy, Durham, NC
Latitude: 35.9814000
Longitude: -78.8208000

POLREP No.:	1	Site #:	A4LS
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:	5/24/2006	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	5/24/2006	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

On the evening of May 23, 2006, a parent noticed elemental mercury on their child's clothes. In turn, the parent contacted the Poison Control Center for advice. The Poison Control Center then contacted the Durham County Public Health Department (DCPHD), which immediately started an investigation into the source of the mercury. DCPHD discovered that an individual had stolen approximately 10 pounds of elemental mercury and that this individual had taken the mercury to a Church service and dispersed it to four children. At least one of these children took the mercury to the Oak Grove Elementary School and proceeded to "spray" other kids, the school bus, etc. with the mercury. On May 24th, Ms. Luanne Williams, Toxicologist, NC State Health Dept. contacted EPA Region 4 and requested assistance with the investigation and cleanup of the mercury contamination. EPA assessed and monitored 27 separate locations (25 residences, 1 Church, 1 School). Of the 27 locations, 18 sites needed active removal actions (including the school and Church), ranging from the removal of contaminated clothes, to the removal of floors, walls, etc.

EPA worked in a Unified Command with the Durham County Emergency Management Agency, and the Durham County Public Health Department. Durham PD, Durham County Sheriff's Office, State of NC EMA, and the NC State Health Dept. also integrated into the established ICS structure.

Current Activities

EPA will continue assess homes for mercury contamination and begin decontamination activities.

Planned Removal Actions

Decontaminate home where mercury levels pose a health threat

response.epa.gov/oakgrove