

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region V
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Monday, December 11, 2006

From: Jeffrey Kimble

To: Ray Scott, Environmental Affairs Ross Delrosario, U.S. EPA
Monesh Chabria, U.S. EPA

Subject: First and Final
Westbrook Mercury Spill
Detroit, MI
Latitude: 42.4044000
Longitude: -83.2503000

POLREP No.:	1	Site #:	B5FG
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:	10/26/2006	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	10/26/2006	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:	11/9/2006	NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:	11/9/2006	Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

The Westbrook Mercury Spill Site (Site) is a residential home in Detroit, Michigan, where an accidental spill of elemental mercury occurred. The mercury spill was discovered when new occupants of the home attempted to turn on the heat in the house for the first time. It was then discovered that the mercury ampoule was broken and the mercury had been released. Unknowingly, the new occupant had spread the mercury through the first floor of the house while sweeping and vacuuming.

U.S. EPA was requested to conduct an emergency cleanup by both the Michigan Department of Community Health and the City of Detroit Health Department (CDHD).

Current Activities

On October 26, 2006, U.S. EPA met CDHD at the Site and conducted mercury vapor monitoring using a Lumex 915+. Mercury vapor in the house, which was only at 55 degrees F, was as high as 9,900 nanograms per meter cubed (ng/M3) in air. Due to this level being present at such low temperatures, CDHD immediately informed the occupants that they need to evacuate the house until a cleanup occurred and the children needed to be put up at an alternate residence. U.S. EPA and CDHD worked with the resident to contact both the homeowners insurance company and warranty company for the home. Neither policy had a provision to pay for the cleanup. U.S. EPA initiated a cleanup and called contractors to report to the site the next morning.

On October 27, 2006, U.S. EPA and it's contractors initiated an emergency removal action at the Site. Once the house was heated for cleanup operations, mercury vapor levels in the house jumped to as high as 48,000 ng/M3 in air. Contaminated carpet and wood flooring was removed from the house and a mercury vacuum was utilized to collect as much elemental mercury as possible. After the physical removal of contaminated items, the area was treated with a detergent solution (HgX) and rinsed clean. Also, porous items (clothes, bedding, etc..) from the house were removed and screened for mercury contamination. Some items were heated and vented due to elevated levels of mercury vapor coming from them. Also, to facilitate the cleanup, the house was heated to over 70 degrees F. U.S. EPA heated and vented the house and left Site for the evening.

On October 28th, 2006, U.S. EPA returned to the Site and conducted clearance air monitoring for mercury vapors. All readings were less than 1,000 ng/M3 in air and the residents were allowed to re-occupy the house. The porous items removed from the house were screened and returned to the residents with the exception of several pairs of the children's shoes which were too contaminated to return to them. A representative sample of all materials removed from the residence was collected and delivered to an off-site laboratory for disposal profile analysis.

On November 9, 2006, U.S. EPA completed the emergency removal action by disposing of the the waste generated during the cleanup.

Planned Removal Actions

None, actions complete.

Next Steps

U.S. EPA and CDHD requested that the residents continue to heat and vent the house for at least the next several weeks in order to further lower the mercury vapor levels present in the home.

Key Issues

None.

Disposition of Wastes

10 yards of non-hazardous mercury contaminated debris

Waste Stream	Quantity	Manifest #	Disposal Facility
Non-hazardous mercury contaminated debris	10 yards		Waste Managment, Romulus, Michigan

response.epa.gov/WestbrookMercury