

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

Date: Thursday, April 19, 2007

From: Robert Wise

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Subject: Halaco Engineering
6200 Perkins, Oxnard, CA
Latitude: 34.1389000
Longitude: -119.1819000

POLREP No.:	10	Site #:	09X6
Reporting Period:	03/24-04/20/2007	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	2/5/2007	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	2/5/2007	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

Halaco Engineering Company began operation as a metal reclaiming facility at 6200 Perkins Road in Oxnard in 1965. The approximately 38-acre facility consists of two separate parcels on either side of the Oxnard Industrial Drain: a smelter and a waste disposal area (which includes the waste management unit, or WMU). Different types of waste were deposited on the WMU including heavy metals and radioactive contaminated slag (a byproduct of the smelting process). It is estimated that more than 710,000 cubic yards of waste make up the WMU. Halaco also deposited waste in the area north of the WMU. Current estimates of waste process solids in the smelter exceed 7,000 cubic yards. An additional 5,000 cubic yards of waste process solids were removed from the northern area of the Ormond Beach Wetlands.

Halaco's waste disposal practices have been cited by federal, state and local authorities for many years. The facility received various orders and notices of violation from EPA, the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, the California Department of Health Services Radiological Health Branch, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control and the City of Oxnard Fire Department.

In 2002, Halaco filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. In 2006, after Halaco ceased operations, the bankruptcy was converted to a Chapter 7 (liquidation) bankruptcy. Later that year, Chickadee Remediation Co purchased the waste management area and assumed the lease to the former smelter property. Alpha and Omega Development LLC subsequently acquired the waste management area from Chickadee.

On March 7, 2007, Halaco was proposed for inclusion on the National Priorities List.

Current Activities

March 23 - April 19, 2007, 1 OSC, 2 START, 2 PST, 14 ERRS

ERRS finished the grading of the WMU and the OID banks along the smelter. ERRS continued to lay down the coir matting. ERRS is 12 rolls short to finish the matting. As a result the matting will be finished the week of April 30, 2007, while the fencing is being installed. ERRS hired a radiation consultant to assist in the decontamination effectiveness surveys of the conex boxes, heavy equipment and other scrap metal that was sold by the bankruptcy trustee. The conex boxes and much of the scrap metal has low level alpha radiation contamination. Based on the recommendations of the scientist from EPA RIENL, the material will be allowed off-site for scrap metal recovery only. The START assessed the scrap metal for waste process solids contamination. Based on START's assessment, OSC R. Wise consulted with the Certified Unified Program Agency - CUPA (Oxnard Fire) and the CA Department of Toxic Substance Control on the status of the waste process solids contaminated scrap. All scrap contaminated with waste process solids will have to be decontaminated before it leaves the site.

On April 12, 2007, the CUPA and Oxnard Code Enforcement conducted an inspection of the smelter buildings. Based on this assessment, the Code Enforcement decided that that buildings should be red tagged as unsafe. Previous assessment of the structures by EPA determined that the buildings were grossly contaminated with the waste process solids. The smelter pots in the buildings are contaminated with waste process solids, asbestos and radioactive materials (from the refractory brick).

On April 16, 2007, the OSC discovered an old rusting can of smokeless powder. After consulting with the FBI Bomb Squad, the Ventura Co. Sheriffs Department Bomb Squad (VCS) was contacted for assistance. The VCS removed the material from the site for later disposal.

On April 16, 2007 while assessing the scrap metal for gamma radiation, the ERRS radiation consultant and START discovered elevated levels of gamma radiation in the soil in the southeastern corner of the smelter. Gamma levels exceeded 1,000,000 cpm at ground surface (background <20,000 cpm). On April 17, 2007, ERRS dug an exploratory pit and determined that material had been buried in that location. The material was a dispersed source. According to ERRS radiation consultant and START, the material appeared to be bag house dust. This finding is consistent with intelligence collected by the OSC, that Halaco was burying their waste in that corner. The exploratory pit was filled in and the area covered with gravel to keep the dust down.

On April 18, 2007, ERRS and START conducted exploratory trenching on the road leading from the command post to the WMU. Examination of the excavated material documented the presence of waste process solids.

Planned Removal Actions

1. Completion of the coir matting installation the week of April 30, 2007.
2. Installation of a perimeter fence around the smelter and the WMU starting the week of April 30, 2007. Fence installation is expected to take 4 - 6 weeks.
3. Assessment of the southeast corner of the smelter during the week of April 30, 2007. The assessment will include the definition of the horizontal extent of contamination using gamma radiation surveys. The vertical extent of contamination will be determined using the EPA ERS Geoprobe.
4. Demolition of all structures in the smelter with the exception of the office.
5. Scrap metal removal by the party that purchased the scrap metal under START oversight.
6. Excavation and disposal of all radioactive waste in the southeast corner of the smelter.
7. Excavation of the road to the smelter and restoration of the road in consultation with the natural resources trustee.

Next Steps

1. Finish installation of the coir matting.
2. Installation of the perimeter fence.
3. Assessment of the southeast corner of the facility.

Key Issues

1. The discovery of the radioactive materials in the southeast corner of the facility.
2. Enforcement issues associated with the demolition of the smelter. The landowner will be given the opportunity to demolish the smelter.