

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region VII
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Tuesday, May 22, 2007

From: Janice Kroone

Subject: ESF-10

Greensburg Tornado

Greensburg, KS

Latitude: 37.6028000

Longitude: -99.2928000

POLREP No.:	8	Site #:	MA#1699DR-KS-EPA-01
Reporting Period:	5/17-21/2007	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	5/5/2007	Response Authority:	Stafford Act
Mob Date:	5/5/2007	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

Severe storms with rain, hail, high winds, and tornadoes moved through eight counties in central/western Kansas during the evening of May 4, 2007. The city of Greensburg and outlying rural areas (Kiowa County, approximately 1,500 residents) was hit directly by an F5 tornado. This particular tornado tracked through six counties (starting in Comanche, Kiowa, Edwards, Stafford, Pratt, and Barton Counties). EPA dispatched three On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) to the scene with the response truck and mobile command post, and they reported observing scattered miscellaneous hazardous waste, including solvents, paints, propane tanks, chlorine cylinders, anhydrous ammonia tanks, rail tankers, etc.

Current Activities

EPA crews continue to conduct curbside pickup of household hazardous waste (HHW) items and white goods. A total of 10,208 items were picked up from May 17-21, 2007, for a total of 27,002 items picked up to date. EPA has significantly decreased EPA contract personnel, equipment, and work hours to ensure no cost overruns until an amendment to the mission assignment is received. HHW is staged at the south staging areas, and white goods are transported to the south landfill awaiting arrangements for Freon extraction.

Damaged transformers collected by EPA have been inventoried and sampled. Information on the transformers has been provided to the city who will make arrangements for transportation and disposal.

The State HazMat team demobilized from Greensburg. EPA is now the agency responding to spills. On May 20, 2007, a potential cyanide incident was reported. EPA and START dispatched to the location and, utilizing Level B capabilities, entered the area with air monitoring equipment. Nothing could be detected on the instrumentation. Upon further investigation, a small container of Malathion was found crushed. It was determined that the odor came from this container. EPA and START continued to monitor the area to determine if it was safe to continue with debris removal in the area and provided assistance to the National Guard and the Department of Transportation equipment operators working in the area.

On May 21, 2007, a 20-gallon diesel spill north of 54 Hwy. was reported, but no spill could be located. Abandoned drums and tanks were located in the area, but all were located on private property and no waterway was potentially impacted. EPA also responded to a report of three large propane tanks (250-gallon, 500-gallon, and 1000-gallon) located in various areas of the city. The 250-gallon propane tank was taken allegedly by the owner. The 500-gallon tank was owned by the COOP, completely empty, damaged beyond repair, and could not be recovered by the COOP with the current equipment on the site. The 1000-gallon propane tank was located north of the city lake and was stuck in a tree line. It was owned by a private individual who has been contacted about its location. The tank may have contained some residual propane. EPA also responded to a diesel spill from a dump truck that had an equipment failure during debris removal operations. Oil dry was supplied to the operator who cleaned up the remaining diesel with EPA oversight.

Bulk asbestos samples have been taken at approximately 42 locations. The sample results and a review of the high school's asbestos management plan indicate asbestos in four properties. The school district is working with an engineer to determine structural integrity. It will then be determined if the structure will be demolished. The Kansas Department of Health and the Environment (KDHE) and EPA concurred that one of the agencies, KDHE or EPA, will be present to provide guidance whenever demolition is preformed. Property owners will be contacted with the results through the EPA Region 7 Office in Kansas City.

Waste oil collected at the HHW pad was shipped off the site by Safety-Kleen at no cost.

EPA continues to provide key GIS information for the response and for related city and county needs.

Planned Removal Actions

Curbside pickup of HHW and white goods continues.

The HazMat team has demobilized from Greensburg, and EPA is prepared to respond to spills or releases if needed.

Next Steps

HHW continues to be collected and bulked at the HHW pad for disposal. EPA is looking at various recycling opportunities for paints and other materials that may be reused.

Freon extraction from refrigerators, freezers, etc., is pending receipt of information for qualified personnel to perform this task.

EPA is awaiting results from the soil samples taken from the areas where transformers leaked. Results will determine the next course of action.

Key Issues

EPA continues to work with KDHE and the city on debris removal issues relating to potential asbestos containing buildings, etc.

EPA has significantly downsized resources on the site and is working on a demobilization plan for turnover of operations to the city, county, and state.

response.epa.gov/greensburg