

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

Date: Tuesday, May 29, 2007

From: Janice Kroone

Subject: ESF-10

Greensburg Tornado

Greensburg, KS

Latitude: 37.6028000

Longitude: -99.2928000

POLREP No.:	9	Site #:	MA#1699DR-KS-EPA-01
Reporting Period:	5/22-28/2007	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, derailed rail tankers, etc.

Current Activities

EPA has significantly decreased EPA contract personnel, equipment, and work hours due to the Memorial Holiday weekend.

Damaged transformers collected by EPA continue to be inventoried and sampled. Information on the transformers continues to be provided to the city who will make contracting arrangements for transportation and disposal.

Bulk asbestos samples have been taken at approximately 42 non-residential locations. The sample results and a review of the school's asbestos management plan indicate asbestos at the high school and three commercial 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 concur that when action is taken at the school and the building is addressed, KDHE and possibly EPA will be present to provide guidance. Property owners will be contacted with the results through the EPA Region 7 Office in Kansas City.

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) is staged at the south staging areas, and white goods are transported to the south landfill awaiting Freon extraction scheduled to begin on 5/29.

The State's Regional HazMat team demobilized from Greensburg and, as a result, EPA is called for spills and releases. The following responses were conducted by EPA:

On May 22, EPA responded to the report of a 250-gallon diesel tank discovered under debris next to the courthouse. The tank was righted and no release occurred. EPA also responded to the report of 6 drums of unknown material next to the railroad tracks. It was determined that the drums were not dislocated as the result of the storm and they were located on railroad property. The railroad was notified and they sent their response contractor to overpack and sample the containers for ultimate disposal.

Today's total HHW and white goods collected was 1,210 bringing the project total to 27,347.

On May 23, EPA conducted an assessment of an above ground storage tank. The Kansas Corporation Commission was contacted and will follow up. EPA also coordinated the re-start of the bulk storage tank transfer of anhydrous ammonia at the Southern Planes COOP, which had been postponed until power was restored.

Today's total HHW and white goods collected was 690 bringing the project total to 28,037.

On May 24, EPA did not respond to any hazmat events so draft transition/demobilization plans were initiated.

Today's total HHW and white goods collected was 345 bringing the project total to 28,382.

On May 25, a local farmer who owns the property to the west and north of the north landfill requested EPA check the particulate levels in the area of his farm due to the smoky conditions that day from the landfill fire pits. Readings were taken at the north fence line of the landfill and near his farmhouse (approximately ¼ mile away), both directly downwind of the smoke plume. The farmer does not currently reside at the farmhouse. The short-term readings near his farmhouse were well below the short-term exposure limits set by OSHA for respirable particulate matter. The farmer was informed of the results and advised to avoid prolonged exposure to the smoke. KDHE and the Operations Sections were informed of the results and reminded that EPA recommends that all workers at the north landfill wear dust masks.

Today's total HHW and white goods collected was 162 bringing the project total to 28,544.

On May 26, EPA responded at the request of the US Forest Service (USFS) to assess pool chemicals found in the basement of a building next to the swimming pool. The USFS intends on using this basement as a storm shelter. The structural integrity of all pool chemical containers were intact and nothing was detected using handheld air monitoring instruments. The USFS was informed of the results and advised that if the basement is used as a storm shelter, no one should open any of the containers. EPA responded at the request of the fire department to a scheduled burn north of town to determine if there might be an asbestos issue for their firemen present. The burn was for a newer barn and most likely did not contain asbestos. The barn was already ablaze when EPA arrived. EPA responded to the report of an ammonia release. It was determined to be coming from the Southern Plains COOP who was bleeding off a nurse tank through a water bath which had become saturated. The water bath was switched out and the operations were completed without further incident. EPA then responded at the request of the fire department to the report of a natural gas leak on the southwest side of Greensburg. EPA walked the area of concern for 30 minutes monitoring for total Volatile Organic Compounds, Lower Exposure Limit, and mercaptain with no detections. EPA was later informed that the gas company had been pressure testing lines earlier in the day, which was most likely the source. No further action was determined to be necessary.

Today's total HHW and white goods collected was 957 bringing the project total to 29,501.

On May 27, EPA responded to the former hospital location to collect a mercury pressure gauge at the request of the hospital administrator. EPA conducted carbon monoxide monitoring around the work site trailers and generators surrounding the courthouse. The results of were well below the OSHA standard of 35 parts per million. Asbestos sample results for ambient air were received with four results revealing no asbestos fibers present. The other two samples could not be analyzed due to excess dust on the sample media. One of these two was located at the north landfill downwind of the fire pits and the other was located between Highway 54 and the temporary hospital.

Today's total HHW and white goods collected was 291 bringing the project total to 29,792.

On May 28, particulate readings were taken due to the drier conditions and higher winds. Levels were well below the OSHA respirable threshold.

Today's total HHW and white goods collected was 412 bringing the project total to 30,204.

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 scheduled to begin after the holiday weekend.

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