

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region VI
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Wednesday, August 1, 2007

From: Mark Hayes

To: R6 PolRep LA, Response and Prevention Branch
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Subject: Continuation of Action
Chalmette Mercury Spill
2917 Corinne Street, Chalmette, LA
Latitude: 29.9408900
Longitude: -89.9450500

POLREP No.:	9	Site #:	
Reporting Period:	7/25/07 - 8/1/07	D.O. #:	0701-007
Start Date:	6/29/2007	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	6/30/2007	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	EP-S6-07-01
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

On 27 June 2007, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) contacted the EPA Region 6 hotline to report a mercury release at a home in Chalmette Louisiana. The EPA subsequently notified the National Response Center (NRC 840234) of the release. The release was originally reported to the LDEQ by the Children's Hospital of New Orleans, La. The residents' youngest child became ill a few weeks ago and was being treated at the Children's Hospital. After several examinations, the residents brought to the doctor's attention that they recently had found mercury within their home. The child was then tested for mercury poisoning, and tests indicated that the child had mercury levels approximately 40 - 70 times that of normal levels.

On 28 June, START-3 conducted an assessment of the residence. Initial air monitoring conducted by START-3 indicated levels of mercury in air of up to 60 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$). Based upon the START-3's report, EPA senior management was briefed on the situation. On the morning of 29 June, ERRS was verbally tasked to conduct a site walk that same day utilizing the OSC's warrant authority for emergency actions.

Current Activities

July 25, 2007: work resumed. The living room window was re-decontaminated at areas where elevated mercury vapor levels were found. One 25 cubic yard roll-off box of mercury contaminated debris was taken off-site for disposal. The house was vented until July 30, 2007, at which time, the house was put through another heat and vent cycle.

July 31, 2007: work resumed. After the venting cycle, the house was closed up for at least 1 hr; initial air monitoring revealed mercury vapor at concentrations between 0.3 and 0.5 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The living room window was re-decontaminated again because of areas of elevated mercury vapor levels. The house was shut up and heated to approximately 100 °F with the central heating system; mercury vapor was observed between 0.8 and 0.9 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. The house was allowed to vent over night; confirmatory air sampling was planned for August 1, 2007.

August 1, 2007: work resumed. Confirmatory air sampling for elemental mercury was conducted in the living areas of the house under normal living conditions. After sampling, the house was allowed to vent.

Next Steps

Next steps depend on sample results; results are expected by COB on August 6, 2007. If results are lower than clean-up level of 1 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$, house restoration will begin. If samples results are above the clean-

up level, the removal action will continue.

Key Issues

Source of the mercury release has not been identified.

All members of the family except the daughter have elevated levels of mercury in their systems.

There is a heightened community concern most likely due to the mercury-contaminated residence being in the footprint of the Murphy Oil release. However, numerous analytical results of the materials from the Murphy Oil release indicated non-detects for mercury.

Estimated Costs *

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
Extramural Costs				
ERRS - Cleanup Contractor	\$200,000.00	\$91,096.22	\$108,903.78	54.45%
START-3	\$61,000.00	\$49,000.00	\$12,000.00	19.67%
Intramural Costs				
Total Site Costs	\$261,000.00	\$140,096.22	\$120,903.78	46.32%

* The above accounting of expenditures is an estimate based on figures known to the OSC at the time this report was written. The OSC does not necessarily receive specific figures on final payments made to any contractor(s). Other financial data which the OSC must rely upon may not be entirely up-to-date. The cost accounting provided in this report does not necessarily represent an exact monetary figure which the government may include in any claim for cost recovery.

response.epa.gov/chalmetteLAmercuryspill

POLREP #9 Last Updated 8/8/2007