

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

Date: Sunday, June 6, 2004

From: Martha Wolfe

Subject: Initial/Final POLREP

California Gulch NPL (OU02-Leadville Corporation Lab)

210 Starr Street (et al), Leadville, CO

Latitude: 39.2578000

Longitude: -106.2929000

POLREP No.:	1	Site #:	08-29
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:	5/3/2004	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:		Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	NPL
Completion Date:	5/28/2004	Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

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The Site is located in Lake County and is part of the California Gulch Superfund site - Operable Unit 02. It is near Leadville and is northwest of Stringtown, Colorado. The lab was used by an ore mill which was in operation from the early 1970's thru 1986 and has been abandoned. When the mill was operational, ore was pulverized and put through a cyanide leach process for silver extraction.

Site evaluation

On March 04, 2004, Region 8 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Emergency Response (ER) On-Scene Coordinators (OSCs) Wolf and Myers, accompanied by an EPA Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START) team leader and an Environmental Response and Removal Services (ERRS) Removal Manager (RM), visited the site. Various chemicals were observed in containers ranging from 8 ounces to more than 5 gallons in size. Crystals were observed on several containers of Nitric and Perchloric Acid, indicating a possible shock-sensitive situation. The bulk of the chemicals, however, were stored on wooden shelving in a 5 foot by 4 foot room, and they were sorted alphabetically, rather than by hazard class or chemical type.

The Leadville Corporation representative also pointed out a building up the hill from the laboratory building that contained what appeared to be several 50 or 100 pound bags - labeled "soda ash". He mentioned that the State was interested in having this removed. There was also a large, red, unlocked box labeled "Danger: Contains Explosives!"

Description of threat

The uncontrolled state of the chemicals in the lab allowed easy accessibility to trespassers (especially children) who could get into the building. Some chemicals were very likely shock sensitive - especially the box of explosives. The crystallization on the lids of several containers indicates a likely shock sensitive situation, which could result in an explosion and mixing of chemicals in nearby containers. Hazardous substances in storage containers also posed a threat of release.

Current Activities

Situation

Removal actions

EPA's Cleanup Contractor (START2) mobilized to the Site on 05/03/05 to segregate, consolidate, and inventory the drums and solids which had been abandoned on-site. Materials were consolidated, staged,

and overpacked; containers were decontaminated, crushed, and placed in a repository. The following materials were processed/overpacked for transportation and disposal:

Hazardous Material Estimated Amount

lead/silver nitrate 11 pounds
hydrogen peroxide 40 pounds
sodium cyanide 6 pounds
mercury chloride 2 pounds
carbon tetrachloride 244 pounds
nitric acid 180 pounds
phosphoric/sulfuric acid 191 pounds
acetic acid 64 pounds
potassium hydroxide 4 pounds
hydrochloric acid 536 pounds
lead acid batteries 167 pounds
cresol 4 pounds
ammonium hydroxide 540 pounds
potassium hydroxide batteries 13 pounds
bromine 6 pounds
sodium sulfide 13 pounds
hexamethylenetetramine 67 pounds
isopropanol/ketone 18 pounds
aluminum/zinc dust 21 pounds
soda ash 3630 pounds
limestone 4 pounds
oil sludge 280 pounds

On May 23, 2004, the EPA On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) mobilized to the Site to initiate planning for the detonation of potentially explosive materials. EPA and START2 met with the Colorado Springs bomb squad, local fire department, County Sheriffs, State Health, and the ambulance crew to:

- ▶ Survey and choose the site for detonation;
- ▶ Meet at the hospital with doctors who will be on duty during the detonation; and,
- ▶ Review the IAP which will be used for detonation;

On May 24, 2004, the EPA OSC, team members from above, and members of EPA's Superfund Technical Assistance and Response Team (START2) and Emergency Response and Remediation Services (ERRS) contractors mobilized to the Site to initiate the detonation. The following activities took place:

- ▶ Flammable products (such as paper, etc.) were removed from the "hot zone";
- ▶ Glass which could shatter or "project" into the air was removed, moved or covered.
- ▶ Gas/electric connections in the detonation area were verified for safety and/or disconnection;
- ▶ Materials which were to be detonated were removed from the lab building to the detonation area and staged in preparation for detonation; and,
- ▶ Approximately 30 pounds of potentially explosive materials were detonated.

Planned Removal Actions

Disposal

The hazardous materials listed above which were not detonated have been transported and disposed at Clean Harbors Environmental Services, Inc., Kimball, Nebraska..

Key Issues

Future Plans

The work at this site was performed in compliance with the NCP and this Removal Action is considered complete as of May 28, 2004.

response.epa.gov/calgulchleadvillecorplab