

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Wednesday, October 17, 2007

From: Terrence Byrd

Subject: Cleanup Continues

Lamar Life Building Mercury Spill

317 East Capitol Street, Jackson, MS

Latitude: 32.2994000

Longitude: -90.1831000

POLREP No.:	2	Site #:	A4RL
Reporting Period:	10/16/07 - 10/17/07	D.O. #:	
Start Date:	10/16/2007	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	10/17/2007	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

The Lamar Life Building is reported to be a privately owned building being rented for use as a federal court. The building is located at 317 East Capitol Street, in Jackson, Hinds County, Mississippi.

On October 16, 2007, the Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) requested EPA assistance in assessment and monitoring of cleanup activities at the Site. Reportedly approximately 1.5 cups (about 11 lbs) of mercury had been spilled within the building from an overturned trash can. The source of the mercury was unknown at the time of the report. MDEQ reported that approximately 75 people had been evacuated from the building, and the building owner had employed a cleanup contractor to mitigate the spill.

OSC Terrence Byrd was dispatched to provide assistance and oversight. START contractor support was also deployed.

Current Activities

The building is unoccupied as the environmental contractor works to reduce the mercury contamination in the most commonly used portions of the building. The source of the spill was from a jar that was accidentally obtained as trash by a janitorial service. EPA has established a unified command consisting of EPA, the responsible party and MDEQ. In consultation with OSHA and ATSDR, a cleanup level of 10 ug/m3 was established throughout the building. The building, which consists of 10 floors and a basement, has shown levels of contamination throughout the first eight floors. However, the levels appear to lessen as the floors ascend. The majority of contamination appears to be concentrated in the foyers, as well as in and immediately around the elevators. As a precautionary measure, all occupants of the building were contacted and advised to report to an off-site location in order to have their shoes and clothes screened. All media relations are being routed through a public information officer.

Planned Removal Actions

The RPs environmental contractor (USES) will continue to remediate the building through our next two operational periods (0800 - 2000 being an operational period). USES will attempt to clear areas of entrance, egress and high volume in order to have the building available for occupancy as soon as possible. START continues to perform site documentation as well as head the screening of clothing. EPA will designate a CIC to coordinate with the PIO in order to compose a fact sheet for residents. OSCs Byrd and Gaughn will continue oversight of the operation along with MSDEQ and the RP.

Key Issues

Here is a copy of the press release asking for the voluntary screening:

Jackson – As officials and contractors continue to clean a mercury spill from earlier this week, people who were inside the Lamar Life Building in downtown Jackson between 5 p.m. Monday and 5 p.m. Tuesday are asked to report for a

voluntary screening.

People can report for the screening between 5 and 9 p.m. tonight or between 7 a.m. and 9 p.m. Thursday at the basement level of the Capitol Towers Building, 125 S. Congress St.

Those being screened are asked to bring all clothes and shoes they wore while inside the Lamar Life Building and to bag the clothes and shoes separately in plastic bags for testing purposes. Tests will determine whether mercury was tracked outside the building.

Officials have not determined how much mercury was present or its source. There are no indications that the mercury was intentionally released. The building remains closed during the cleanup.

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