

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region IV
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Thursday, September 4, 2008

From: Carter Williamson

Subject: FINAL POLREP

Woodbury Explosive Response Site
107 East Colonial St., Woodbury, TN
Latitude: 35.8222000
Longitude: -86.0672000

POLREP No.:	2	Site #:	A4D1
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:	5/23/2008	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	5/22/2008	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:	5/23/2008	NPL Status:	
Completion Date:	5/23/2008	Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:		Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

On May 11, 2008, a fire broke out at 107 East Colonial Street in Woodbury, Cannon County, Tennessee. The Woodbury Fire Department responded and ultimately extinguished the fire on May 12, 2008. The site is the home of Mr. Jeffery Travis. Mr. Travis stated that he had been striking an aerial flare with a hammer when it initiated and started the conflagration. He was subsequently treated at a local emergency room and briefly jailed for starting the fire. Mr. Travis is an unlicensed manufacturer of fireworks and explosives who has been involved in at least one similar incident. EPA had previously responded to the residence in 1997 after Mr. Travis injured himself in a small explosion.

Current Activities

After the recent fire, local officials discovered hazardous substances, including reactive chemicals and oxidizers, within the residence and subsequently requested assistance from multiple state and federal agencies, including EPA. On May 22, 2008, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation filed report number 871807 with the National Response Center requesting EPA assistance. On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) Carter Williamson of the EPA Emergency Response and Removals Branch (ERRB) was dispatched to the site. OSC Williamson requested START support and, subsequently, requested Emergency and Rapid Response Services (ERRS) support as well. USES, a subcontractor of WRS Infrastructure and Environment, Inc., served as the ERRS contractor to EPA.

Planned Removal Actions

EPA, supported by Tetra Tech START site manager Mr. Chris Draper and four USES personnel led by Mr. Todd Taylor, mobilized to the scene the morning of May 23, 2008. A brief summary of Mr. Travis's history and the current response was provided by Special Agent Donald Jones of the Tennessee State Fire Marshall's Office Bomb and Arson Section and by Special Agent J.W. Brown of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives (ATF). According to Special Agent Jones, his department was notified on May 19 and arrived on the scene to discover that Servpro, a fire and water damage cleanup contractor hired by Mr. Travis's insurance company, had already emptied most of the contents and personal effects from the residence, thus compromising the scene and evidence. Special Agent Brown stated that ATF had discovered polyvinyl chloride pipes with explosives residue, smoke bombs, and other materials and had subsequently open-detonated them on May 22, 2008, at a nearby rock quarry owned by Vulcan Materials Company. Energetic and explosive materials discovered during the 1997 response had also been open-detonated at the Vulcan quarry. Ms. Faye Morse, the Cannon County Emergency Management Agency Director, arrived and further elucidated response activities conducted before OSC Williamson arrived. Special Agent in Charge John Adcock of the EPA Criminal Investigation Division was on scene to assist with reservation and collection of the evidence. OSC Williamson informed Ms. Morse that he would like to speak with Mr. Travis. Ms. Morse arranged to have Mr. Travis brought to the residence to answer questions and to help identify any unknown items that might be discovered during EPA's investigation. Local responders had removed numerous flares, fuses, and hazardous chemicals from the residence, segregated the items, and staged

them on a covered patio in the rear of the residence. At OSC Williamson's direction, Mr. Draper and Mr. Taylor prepared to make a site entry to conduct air monitoring and locate any remaining hazardous materials. The initial entry team donned appropriate personal protective equipment, including flame-resistant clothing, hard hats, and safety glasses, and prepared to enter the residence. A MultiRAE plus, equipped with sensors for carbon monoxide, hydrogen sulfide, percent oxygen, percent lower explosive limit, and a photoionization detector, was used to monitor the air within the residence throughout the entry. Explosion-proof radios were used to communicate findings and progress to OSC Williamson throughout the entry.

The entry team discovered several hazardous materials, including potassium chlorate, lead azide, formic acid, fuses, and glacial acetic acid. With concurrence from

EPA, Lieutenant Lee Chaffin, Special Operations Supervisor with the Tennessee Highway Patrol, determined that with the exception of the fuses and flares, all of the materials discovered could be safely open-detonated at the Vulcan quarry. The materials for open detonation were inventoried, segregated, packaged, and loaded aboard a trailer for transportation to the quarry by local officials for subsequent

open detonation. The Tennessee Highway Patrol agreed to take the fuses and flares to one of its facilities for open burning at a later date.

All interested agency and organization personnel then traveled to the Vulcan quarry in Readyville, Tennessee, to prepare for the open detonation. The materials for open detonation had been packaged into two 30-gallon open-top, poly drums. Tennessee Highway Patrol Special Operations personnel prepared the two drums to detonate approximately 30 seconds apart. Each drum was configured within the safety of the quarry to detonate and ignite a 2-gallon can of gasoline that would subsequently incinerate the drums and their contents.

The Tennessee Highway Patrol safely and successfully open-detonated both drums, with only small pieces of the outer drum remaining. All pieces were collected and transported along with the fuses and flares for subsequent open burning by the Tennessee Highway Patrol at one of its facilities. With the hazardous substances safely disposed of, EPA ERRB demobilized from the site to allow law enforcement to continue its investigation.

Next Steps

Local authorities continue to monitor the activities of the owner of the property.

response.epa.gov/woodburyexplosiveresponsesite