

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region VI
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Thursday, February 19, 2004
From: Greg Fife

Subject: Final PolRep - Action is complete
Webster-Gulf Nuclear
202 W. Medical Center Blvd, Webster, TX
Latitude: 29.5378530
Longitude: -95.1185780

POLREP No.:	6	Site #:	06MD
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	
Start Date:	10/18/2001	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	10/18/2001	Response Type:	Emergency
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:	2/19/2004	Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:	TX0000	Contract #	
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

The Response Action at Webster-Gulf Nuclear is complete. All radioactive waste has been removed from the Site and either disposed of or in long term temporary storage. The clean-up goals for the contaminated soil have been accomplished. The Texas Department of Health - Bureau of Radiation Control has cleared the Site. The fence has been removed and the vacant lot is ready for reuse.

The Gulf Nuclear facility was operated by several companies from the early 1970's until the early 1990's. They provided radioactive materials to the oil, petrochemical, medical, and a variety of other industries. They ventured into brokering radioactive waste disposal toward the end of the company's existence. They declared bankruptcy and attempted to reorganize and become viable once again. In October, 2001, the bankruptcy judge changed the bankruptcy status to liquidation.

The Site is located in a busy regional medical center. A hospital, clinics, doctors' offices, and other retail business surround the Site. The radiation from the Site caused the nearest clinic to limit access in adjacent rooms because the dose rate was higher than acceptable.

Current Activities

EPA responded the day the bankruptcy changed and took steps to secure the Site. The fence was extended to enclose the entire Site and the alarm system was reactivated. The October 18, 2001 start date was a month after the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, and just two days after the first anthrax letters were discovered in Washington, D.C.. Terrorism was at the foremost attention and the Gulf Nuclear facility presented itself as a potential source for terrorist weapons. EPA maintained a presence at the Site until the Response Action recommenced on January 7, 2002.

Crews initially identified and inventoried the Site. More than 250 sources and 300 highly contaminated items were found in the building. Loose finely milled radioactive material was scattered through out the building. Primarily Americium-241 and Cesium-137, the material was found in glove-boxes, on work surfaces, on floors, and in unsafe levels suspended in the air. False walls and hidden rooms were found and some of the most contaminated equipment and items were found stashed in those rooms.

The quantity of loose material, sealed sources, and radioactive raw material abandoned in the building could have provided material to create a radiation dispersion device capable of significant contamination. Faulty locks and flimsy doors would not have provided much deterrence to those seeking raw material. Sources were found discarded in the glove-boxes, in cabinets, in coffee cups, on the floor, and hidden in walls and other structures. Significant quantities of loose material could have been scooped up from piles in glove-boxes and other equipment.

The radioactive waste was disposed of at a several facilities. Radium needles were sent to the American Ecology facility in Richland, WA. A large volume of contaminated waste was sent to the Envirocare facility

in Clive, UT. Highly contaminated material was sent to the Barnwell facility in South Carolina. Several pieces sent to Barnwell required special waivers and unique handling in order to safely handle the waste. Several Americium, Americium-Beryllium, and plutonium sealed sources were sent to Department of Energy's Sealed Source Recovery Program. Lead, a small amount of chemicals, and waste under the regulated limits were sent to proper disposal facilities.

A large quantity of "greater than class C" (GTCC) waste was found and generated during the cleanup. GTCC waste is prohibited to be disposed of in any current commercial facility. EPA and the State of Texas worked to provide long term temporary storage of the 14 casks at the Waste Control Specialists facility near Andrews, Texas. This very contaminated waste will be stored until a facility such as the Yucca Mountain facility begins to accept such waste.

Estimated Costs *

	Budgeted	Total To Date	Remaining	% Remaining
Extramural Costs				
Intramural Costs				
Total Site Costs	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	0.00%

* 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/webster

POLREP #6 Last Updated 2/19/2004