

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region II
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Wednesday, January 14, 2009

From: Paul L. Kahn, Michael Hoppe

To: Andrew Raddant, Department of Interior Lisa Levy, OSHA
William Molnar, Sandy Alexander Albert Greco, City of Clifton
Denise Zeno, USEPA Angela Carpenter, USEPA

Subject: Additional Drums of Waste Chemicals Found

Abrachem Chemical
2 Peekay Drive, Clifton, NJ
Latitude: 40.8306000
Longitude: -74.1231000

POLREP No.:	14	Site #:	A212
Reporting Period:		D.O. #:	072
Start Date:	1/2/2009	Response Authority:	CERCLA
Mob Date:	12/30/2008	Response Type:	Time-Critical
Demob Date:		NPL Status:	Non NPL
Completion Date:		Incident Category:	Removal Action
CERCLIS ID #:	NJR000031831	Contract #	EP-W-04-055
RCRIS ID #:			

Site Description

At 1615 hours on 10/29/08 EPA received a notification from the NRC that a chemical release was occurring at Abrachem Chemical, a bulk chemical packaging facility that leased a building in Clifton, Passaic County, NJ. The NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection was on-scene and requested EPAs presence.

At 1730 hours OSC Ellen Banner and OSC Paul Kahn responded to the scene. The company was found to be storing drums and bulk containers of known and unknown chemicals in 17 56-foot long intermodal shipping carriers (ISCs), stacked 3 tiers high (approx. 35 feet). Only 5 of the ISCs could be opened, and inside those it was observed that drums and bulk containers were staged behind tiers of empty poly drums, giving the impression that the ISCs were used for new drum storage. EPA observed that in the one ISC where the release originated at least one drum was leaking its contents onto a wooden pallet; strong chemical odors emanated from the open door of the ISC and were also pervasive in the general area.

The Operator of Abrachem retained the services of a remediation company, and contractor personnel were advised to lay poly sheeting and begin removing and overpacking the leaking and unknown drums that were readily accessible. Work commenced almost immediately, but at 2100 hours was halted due to lack of adequate lighting and inability to physically access the majority of the drums through the narrow doorway.

The Operator of Abrachem and the Owner of the property was issued a Field Expedient Notice, and in response the Operator stated he would initiate a removal action. When his efforts to respond to the release, and threats of a release, proved to be inadequate EPA sought voluntary access to initiate a response action. This access was denied on two occasions. On 12/4/2008 EPA issued a Unilateral Administrative Order (UAO) for access. The Operator refused to comply with the UAO and EPA referred the matter to the Department of Justice for a legal remedy. On 1/8/2009 a federal Magistrate issued an access warrant to EPA to initiate a response action at the Site.

Current Activities

The RP is still in the process of moving his chemical inventory and equipment out of the premises. Although the former Operator of the Site is now cooperating fully with EPA, the process of

moving his chemicals and equipment out was hampering EPA's ability to move drums into the building. OSC informed the RP that he had to re-prioritize the order of removing his inventory so that EPA had the floor space needed to stage drums from the yard outside. The RP's cooperation was thus obtained and ERRS is actively restaging those 40 drums inside the building. This activity should be completed by 1/16. As soon as the HASP is finalized confined space entries into the ISCs to remove the drums of unknowns will begin.

The RP has informed the OSC that the RP is leaving approximately 100 additional drums of (production) line flushings and other chemical wastes behind (see cover photo). A quick scan of some of the drums (if the label information is accurate) reveals the presence of sulphuric acid, glacial acetic acid, MEK, glycol ethers, morpholine, ethylene glycol, hexane, and perchlorethylene, and dozens of unknown chemicals.

In addition to the new-found cache of drums, as the inventory of 'good' chemicals is removed and storage racks become empty, many full salvage drums and damaged 55-gallon drums that had been placed in darkened corners of the premises are now visible. The RP has stated that many of these drums will also be left after they vacate the premises. It is anticipated that an additional 20 - 30 drums and other containers will be left. This could add another perhaps 150 drums in addition to the 1,200 to 1,500 drums in the ISCs and box trailers.

The office areas for EPA and ETI are being set up, and RCMS should be up and running by early next week. ERRS is mobed a forklift, Bobcat, and Lull Lift to the Site.

Planned Removal Actions

Begin removing drums from the ISCs, overpack as needed, stage inside building for sampling and haz-cating.

Complete setting up office areas, move remaining crew to Site, stage heavy equipment, order overpacks and supplies, confer with Fire Dept. officials on Site set-up and contingency planning.

Next Steps

See above.

Key Issues

See above.

response.epa.gov/abrachemchemical