

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region II
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Friday, January 23, 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: Site Visit by Congressman Pascrella
Abrachem Chemical
2 Peekay Drive, Clifton, NJ
Latitude: 40.8306000
Longitude: -74.1231000

POLREP No.:	15	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

Employees of Abrachem attempted to store eight pallets of chemicals inside the former Abrachem premises. The employees were confronted and the chemicals were reloaded on a truck and

removed. Subsequently, the RP finished removing the last few drums of his chemical inventory and equipment out of the premises.

The ERRS contractor has restaged 40 drums that had been left on the ground outside the main building to a prepared staging area inside the building. ERRS has gone through approximately 30 cubic yards of trash left by Abrachem and has removed containers of chemicals and empty containers. Efforts are underway to reduce the fire-load in the building by removing combustible materials such as cardboard, wooden pallets and trash.

Site chemist and chem tech will be on Site Tuesday, 1/27 to set up lab and prepare for sampling/haz-cating. START contractor has been trained on use of Drum Trac program and will be dedicated to documenting drums and other containers that are processed at the Site. On Monday, 1/26, ERRS, EPA, and START will hold practice drills of confined space entries into an empty shipping container in preparation for the first real CSE, scheduled for Tuesday 1/27.

On Friday, 1/23, EPA OSCs and reps from the Communications Division met with reps from the City of Clifton and Congressman Pascarella. The Congressman was briefed on the removal activities at the Site, and he asked some very pointed questions regarding Abrachem, State and City involvement, EPA access, and the mechanics of a Superfund removal action. Following the meeting the Congressman and City officials were given a tour of the Site. The Congressman was pleased to see what EPA was doing to safeguard the public health and the environment and was especially concerned about any negative impacts past releases from the Site may have had on the Passaic River.

The Action Memo is being finalized and may be sent around for concurrence next week.

Planned Removal Actions

Set up on-site lab and prepare to begin haz-cating next week. Initiate Confined Space Entry into the first of 15 shipping containers on 1/27.

Prepare contingency procedures in the event of a spill or fire at the Site and send to CFD for comment.

Next Steps

See above.

Key Issues

See above.

response.epa.gov/abrachemchemical