

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region II
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Saturday, January 31, 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: More Drums Removed From Shipping Containers
Abrachem Chemical
2 Peekay Drive, Clifton, NJ
Latitude: 40.8306000
Longitude: -74.1231000

POLREP No.:	17	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

EPA, RST, and ETI continued operations at the Abrachem Chemical Site.

ERRS continued its confined space entries (CSEs) into the third of 15 Intermodal Shipping Containers (ISC) and relocated drums to the designated staging area. Containers were over-packed as necessary. Each container was given an ID number and photographed. Also, a description (markings, labels, condition) of each container was logged by personnel and entered into Drum Trak data system. As of this date ERRS has removed 128 drums of unknown substances from the ISCs. One overpack drum had the words "Nitro cellulose" on it. The CFD was notified and arrived on the Site to standby and observe. The drum was removed and opened. Inside was a full 55-gallon drum marked "allyl alcohol". The drum was all liquid, which meant it was most likely not nitrocellulose. It was sampled and haz-cated, and had a flash point less than 70F, so the presumption was that it was indeed allyl alcohol.

The Clifton FD has devised a Contingency and Evacuation Plan for the Site in the event of a significant release or fire.

Haz-cating of unknown materials continues. Thirty samples completed to date. The use of a portable IR Spectrometer starting on 2/3/2009 will greatly increase haz-cating throughput.

Sabic Plastics (formerly GE) will be pick up approximately 85 containers of waste O-Cresol on 2/5 & 2/6. Pending RCRA compliance verification by the OSC, these drums will be transported off-site for disposal at no cost to the Government.

The release last week of what appears to be waste oil from one of the ISCs continues, but at a much slower rate due to the very cold weather. ERRS cannot access that ISC until the ISC blocking it is emptied and moved away. It is expected that this will occur on 2/3. At that time the contaminated snow/ice/liquid will be bulked for disposal with the other waste oil on Site.

Congressman Pascrell called the OSC through PAD's Intergovernmental Rep Pat Carr. He was inquiring about the status of the removal action, reiterated his support for the EPA action, and wanted information regarding the in-plant drainage system.

Beth Totman and an intern from PAD visited the Site to photo-/video graph removal activities for the PAD website. Two additional newspaper articles were written about the Site, and a photographer from the Herald News visited the Site to photograph overpacking activities.

The Draft Action Memo has been finalized and will start the concurrence process on 2/3.

Planned Removal Actions

Continue removing drums from the ISCs and continue haz-cating.

Next Steps

See above.

Key Issues

See above.

response.epa.gov/abrachemchemical