

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region II
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Friday, February 6, 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: Abrachem Chemical
2 Peekay Drive, Clifton, NJ
Latitude: 40.8306000
Longitude: -74.1231000

POLREP No.:	18	Site #:	A212
Reporting Period:	01/31/09-02/06/09	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 most prominent event during this reporting period was the shipping of 79 drums of waste orthocresol, a flammable, CERCLA Listed Hazardous Substance, generated by Abrachem Group LLC as part of its processing the virgin chemical for its former customer Sabic Chemical (aka GE Selkirk). The drums are

being transported to a compliance-verified disposal site in Ohio for fuels-blending at no cost to the government. In addition, reps from Sabic have identified perhaps 40 additional drums of waste orthocresol that they will retrieve at a later date (after the drums are overpacked) to transport off-site for disposal.

The removal action was the topic of interest to NBC and NJN television news. PAD staff made arrangements for the news media to air TV coverage of the removal activities. Congressman Pascrell accompanied NBC during their taping session; it was the Congressman's second visit to the Site, and he again expressed his support for EPA's activities and also concern for the potential harmful impacts Abrachem's operations may have had on the surrounding environment, and the Passaic River in particular.

ERRS continues to remove drums from ISCs and stage them inside the building. Approximately 400 drums are staged inside the building, and ERRS and RST have sampled/hazcated 272 samples of unknown chemicals.

OSCs Hoppe and Gallo are in the process of setting up a 5-camera wireless video monitoring system at the Site. The cameras will be located in the drum staging areas and the side yard where the ISCs are located. This system will allow anyone to log-onto the IP addresses for the cameras and observe real-time video of the removal operations. It will also provide additional Site security capability as the premises can be monitored from any computer during non-working periods. As soon as the system is fully functional the IP addresses will be noted in the next POLREP and posted on the OSC.NET web site.

ERRS conducted a corporate H & S audit of removal activities. Recommendations for improving H & S on the Site will be reviewed by the OSC and implemented as deemed appropriate and practical.

Planned Removal Actions

Continue removing drums from the ISCs and staging inside for testing.

Next Steps

See above.

Key Issues

See above.

response.epa.gov/abrachemchemical