

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region II
POLLUTION REPORT

Date: Friday, February 13, 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.:	19	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

ERRS personnel continue to remove drums from the ISCs and overpack/stage according to established procedures. As of this date 6 shipping containers have been emptied and over 500 drums have been staged in inside the main building.

The sampling team located 3 5-gallon pails of sodamide (sodium amide), a flammable solid that reacts with moisture in air. The chemical was shipped from a manufacturer in England to Aldrich Chemical in Wisconsin, but was rejected by Aldrich. How it got to Abrachem is a mystery, but Aldrich has taken responsibility for the waste and will manifest it to Clean Harbors for disposal at no cost to the Government. Arrangements are being made for the material to be shipped off-site next week.

As the ISCs are emptied, ERRS continues to find and identify additional drums of waste O-cresol line wash, generated by Abrachem, that Sabic Plastics will take off-Site for disposal. These drums are being staged in a separate room for disposal at a later time. Perhaps 100 drums of ortho-nitro-chlorobenzene, a CERCLA listed Hazardous Substance, marked with Monsanto labels, have been retrieved. Monsanto will be contacted to see if arrangements can be made for these drums to be removed and disposed of by Monsanto.

A moderation of the cold weather has made outside working conditions more tolerable and the pace of removing drums from the ISCs has increased.

A local businessman from Affordable Space Inc., met with the OSC to discuss the disposition of the empty ISCs. This person stated that he loaned the ISCs to Abrachem but was never paid for them. He asked if he could have them back, and it was agreed that he could retrieve any ISC that was not contaminated. As of this date 5 empty ISCs have been removed from the Site. Their removal makes it easier for ERRS to perform their work and it clears areas of the Site where soil sampling can take place.

As of this date over 350 samples have been haz-cated in the on-Site lab.

NJN News video footage of the 02/05/08 Site tour and interview can be viewed at:
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uf86Yxi31vk>

Planned Removal Actions

Continue to remove, overpack, and stage drums for processing and disposal.

Next Steps

Continue emptying ISCs and box trailers. Continue haz-cating.

Key Issues

See above.

Disposition of Wastes

Waste Stream	Quantity	Manifest #	Disposal Facility
Waste O-cresol labelled "line wash" generated by Abrachem Chemical.	79 55-gallon drums	OH004731891	Veolia Environmental Services, W. Carrollton, OH 45449

response.epa.gov/abrachemchemical