



EPA Continues Cleanup Activities at the Hooker Chemical/Ruco Polymer Superfund site

Hicksville, Nassau County, New York

Community Update

February 2010

EPA's Superfund Program

- Occidental Chemical owned the Site at the time contamination was released at the Site.
- Occidental excavated 310 tons of PCB contaminated soil, removed a concrete tank in an on-Site sump and conducted soil flushing to enhance removal of residual contamination.
- In 2000, EPA determined that a plume of ground water contaminated with vinyl chloride under the Site should be treated using bio-sparging.
- Construction of the initial phase of the biosparge system was completed in October 2006 and is successfully removing vinyl chloride from the ground water. Construction of the entire system should be completed by 2011.

NYSDEC's Corrective Action Program

- Sampling has indicated additional PCB contamination. Soil cleanup is being conducted through the NYSDEC's Hazardous Waste Corrective Action Program.
- Bayer Material Science, the current Site owner, has removed soil with PCB concentrations greater than 50 parts per million (ppm). The NYSDEC has also asked Bayer to conduct a study which will result in the removal of additional soil with PCB concentrations greater than 10 ppm. A draft study will be submitted within the month.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) are providing this notice to update you on the progress made at the Hooker Chemical/Ruco Polymer site. Contamination at the site is being addressed by two programs: EPA's Superfund Program and the New York State Hazardous Waste Program. This factsheet summarizes the site history and the work accomplished and planned under the two programs.

History and the EPA Superfund Program

The Hooker Chemical/Ruco Polymer site, located in an industrial park area of Hicksville, Long Island, was used to manufacture plastics, latex, and esters since 1945. Liquid process wastes were discharged into sand sumps at the site from 1951 to 1975. Numerous leaks and spills of chemicals, including polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) occurred. Waste disposal and chemical spillage also occurred on the adjacent Grumman Aerospace Corporation Plant which is being addressed by the NYSDEC and the U.S. Navy. Currently, all buildings located at the site have been demolished and the entire site has been razed to ground level. The 14-acre site is also fenced-in. Approximately 20,000 people live within a mile of the site. There are four public water supply wells within a mile of the site and 24 wells within 3 miles.

EPA's clean up of the site has been divided into three operable units (OUs). An OU includes an investigation phase, a phase for evaluating potential ways to clean up the site and a remedy selection phase. The remedy selection phase concludes with EPA or the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) issuing a Record of Decision (ROD). The selected remedy, when implemented, mitigates a release, threat of a release, or pathway of exposure.

Occidental Chemical Corporation was the owner and operator at the site at the time of hazardous waste discharge. Consequently, Occidental has been named a potentially responsible party (PRP) for the site. Ownership of the site has changed over the years. Bayer Material Science, LLC, ("Bayer") became owner and operator of the site in October 2000. In February 2002, Bayer decided to shut down operations.

Based on a study performed by Occidental in 1990 to address the PCB-contaminated soils, EPA issued a ROD to excavate and remove the soils. The action was conducted by the PRP under an Administrative Order issued by EPA and consisted of excavation and disposal of 310 tons of PCB contaminated soil, removal of a concrete tank in an on-site sump and installation of a soil flushing system at the sump to enhance removal of residual contamination. Work was completed in 2007.

EPA encourages public participation. If you have questions or would like additional information, please contact:

Thomas Taccone, Project Manager
U.S. EPA
290 Broadway, 20th Floor
New York, New York 10007
212-637-4281
Taccone.Tom@epa.gov

Alicia Barraza, Environmental Engineer
NYSDEC
625 Broadway
Albany, New York 12233
518- 402-8594
aabarraz@gw.dec.state.ny.us

Cecilia Echols, Community
Involvement Coordinator
U.S. EPA
290 Broadway, 26th Floor
New York, New York 10007
212-637-3678
Echols.Cecilia@epa.gov

Beth Totman, Press Officer
U.S. EPA
290 Broadway
New York, New York 10007
212-637-3662
Totman.Elizabeth@epa.gov

Toll-Free Hotline@ 1-800-346-5009

Information Repository:

Hicksville Public Library
169 Jerusalem Avenue
Hicksville, NY 11801

EPA Record Center
290 Broadway, 18th Floor
New York, New York 10007



In 1988, the EPA signed a Consent Order with the PRP to determine the extent of site contamination and to evaluate alternatives for cleanup. In January 1994, based on the results of the study, EPA issued a second ROD which included additional soil sampling, excavation of shallow soils in limited areas and soil flushing. In June 1994, EPA directed Occidental to implement the remedy. Work on the remedy for the second ROD was completed in 2007.

In September 2000, EPA issued a third ROD which called for remediation of the plume of ground water contaminated with vinyl chloride using biosparging. Biosparging is a type of bioremediation which involves injection of air/oxygen into the ground water to enhance the natural breakdown of the vinyl chloride. The treatment system will operate in addition to the ground water treatment systems at the neighboring Northrop/Grumman and Navy sites which are under NYSDEC oversight to remove a mixture of vinyl chloride and other volatile organic compounds which emanate from the sites. The ground water beneath the site is commingled with ground water which is down gradient and beneath the Northrop and NWIRP sites. The biosparge system is being installed in phases. Construction of the initial phase was completed in October 2006 and is successfully removing vinyl chloride from the ground water. The system should be fully installed by 2011.

NYSDEC Hazardous Waste Program

When Bayer Material Science decided to shut its operation at the site in 2002, it had to satisfy New York State requirements for closing its chemical plant operation, and clean up contamination resulting from storage and disposal of hazardous wastes at the site. When contamination is suspected or known at a facility, the owner must address any media that may be contaminated. At the site, this resulted in the discovery of additional soil contamination. Most of the contamination is due to the presence of PCBs. Cleanup of the soil will continue through the NYSDEC's hazardous Waste Corrective Action Program.

The objectives of the Corrective Action Program are to: (1) evaluate the nature and extent of the releases of hazardous wastes and constituents at both the site and off the site; (2) evaluate facility characteristics; and (3) develop and implement corrective measures to protect human health and the environment. To date, Bayer has completed three interim corrective measures to immediately address some of the contamination at the site. This resulted in removal of 15,500 tons of soil with a PCB concentration greater than 50 ppm. Bayer is currently completing a Corrective Measures Study (CMS) that will develop and evaluate remedial alternatives for the site and will recommend final corrective measures. Final corrective measures are implemented through a process which includes construction, operation, and monitoring of the measures selected. One of the remedial alternatives to be evaluated in the CMS is the removal of soil with PCB concentrations greater than 10 ppm. Bayer plans to submit the CMS to the NYSDEC within the month.