

Syncon Resins

New Jersey

EPA ID#: NJD064263817

EPA REGION 2 Congressional District(s): 13

Hudson
Kearny

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Proposed Date: 7/1/1982
Final Date: 9/1/1983

Site Description

The Syncon Resins site encompasses approximately 15 acres in a heavily industrialized area of northern New Jersey. The site is situated on the peninsula formed by the Passaic and Hackensack Rivers. In addition to the 13 buildings on site, there were two unlined lagoons, numerous large bulk storage tanks, underground storage tanks, and at least two chemical reactor buildings housing stainless steel vessels. Prior to their removal, the site also contained approximately 12,800 55-gallon drums. Some of the 55-gallon drums had rusted, spilling their contents onto the soil. The Syncon Resins facility produced alkyd resin carriers for pigments, paints, and varnish products. In the production process, excess xylene or toluene was separated from the wastewater and was reused in subsequent reactions. The remaining wastewater was pumped to an unlined lagoon to evaporate or percolate into the soil. Investigations of the site found extensive contamination of the groundwater, soil, buildings, vessels and tanks. While 10,000 people reside within 3 miles of the site, the closest residential area is about 1 mile to the west in Newark. There are no municipal water supply wells in the immediate area.

Site Responsibility: This site is being addressed through Federal and State actions.

Threat and Contaminants

Groundwater is contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs) including toluene, xylenes, and trichloroethylene (TCE) and heavy metals such as lead and nickel. Contaminants in the sediments include heavy metals, VOCs, and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Soil is contaminated with the pesticides DDT and aldrin, as well as heavy metals, VOCs, and PCBs. Potential health threats existed through direct contact with soils, accidental ingestion of soils, and inhalation of contaminated dust. The site is situated within a coastal wetland area, which could be at risk from contaminant runoff.

Cleanup Approach

This site is being addressed in two stages: immediate actions and a long-term remedial phase focusing on cleanup of the entire site.

Response Action Status

Immediate Actions: Between late 1982 to early 1984, the State removed all of the exposed 55-gallon drums from the site. In early 1990, the site was fenced to provide additional security during cleanup.

Entire Site: Based on the results of the site investigation, EPA selected the following remedial actions for site cleanup in a 1986 Record of Decision (ROD): (1) removal of the contents of the storage tanks and vessels for off-site disposal; (2) decontamination of buildings and tank structures as necessary; (3) excavation of lagoon liquids, sediments, and contaminated surface soil for off-site disposal; (4) installation of a cover over the site that allows natural flushing of underlying soil and groundwater contaminants; (5) collection and treatment of contaminated water from the shallow aquifer, with discharge to the Passaic River; and (6) performance of supplemental studies to evaluate methods to enhance the effectiveness of flushing and/or treatment and destruction of the contaminated soils.

A second operable unit was established to conduct supplemental studies to enhance the existing remediation system at the site and to address the removal of a free product source of contamination. A Focused Feasibility Study report was

finalized by the State in July 1998. A Proposed Plan (PP) was released to the public for comment on September 21, 1999. This PP recommended a remedial alternative that consists of excavation and drainage of contaminated soils, removal of buried debris, and installation of a connecting drainage layer. The ROD was issued on September 27, 2000, following which NJDEP conducted pre-design activities. In 2007, NJDEP requested that EPA assume the lead responsibility for site activities. Currently, EPA has an Interagency Agreement with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Kansas City District, to perform sampling and evaluation activities at the site.

Site Facts: EPA reached a settlement with five potentially responsible parties for the reimbursement of certain past response costs.

Cleanup Progress

By removing all the 55-gallon drums and securing the site, the threat of exposure to hazardous materials has been greatly reduced. The groundwater treatment system is currently operating.

A five-year review report for the site was issued on September 7, 2006.

EPA assumed the lead responsibility for site activities for operable unit 2. The USACE has been handling pre-remedial design activities at the site. On July 14, 2008, a field investigation was conducted which consisted of collecting soil borings and conducting sampling activities. A final focused feasibility study was finalized on August 2010 and in September 2010, and a ROD Amendment was issued on September 30, 2010. Currently, partial funding was provided to start remedial design activities.

Site Repositories

U.S. EPA, 290 Broadway - 18th Floor, New York, N.Y. 10007-1866

Kearny Town Hall, 402 Kearny Avenue, Kearny, New Jersey 07032

Kearny Main Public Library, 318 Kearny Avenue, Kearny, New Jersey 07032