

Cornell Dubilier Electronics

New Jersey

EPA ID#: NJD981557879

EPA REGION 2 Congressional District(s): 07

Middlesex
South Plainfield

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Proposed Date: 9/25/1997
Final Date: 7/28/1998

Site Description

The Cornell Dubilier Electronics site is located at 333 Hamilton Boulevard in South Plainfield, New Jersey. During its years of operation at the site (1936 to 1962), Cornell Dubilier Electronics, Inc. manufactured electronic parts and components, including capacitors. It is reported that transformer oils were tested for an unknown period of time during plant operations. It is alleged that during their operations, Cornell Dubilier Electronics, Inc. dumped material contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and other hazardous substances directly onto site soils. The site is currently known as Hamilton Industrial Park. Through the years, numerous companies have operated at the site as tenants. It is estimated that approximately 540 people reside within 0.25 miles of the site, and the nearest residential homes are less than 200 feet from the site. The total population estimated to live within one mile of the site is 8,700. An unnamed tributary to the Bound Brook traverses the southeast corner of the site property. Water bodies that join the unnamed tributary are designated by the State of New Jersey for the maintenance, migration, and propagation of the natural and established biota. An investigation conducted by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) in the vicinity of Hamilton Boulevard prior to 1991 revealed significant ground water contamination consisting of mainly the volatile organic compounds (VOCs) trichloroethylene and tetrachloroethylene. Due to widespread contamination, residential wells in the area were closed and residents were hooked up to a municipal water supply.

Site Responsibility: This site is being addressed through Federal and potentially responsible party actions.

Threat and Contaminants

The soil at the site is contaminated with VOCs, semi-volatile organic compounds, metals, and PCBs. In addition, building interiors at the site contain elevated levels of PCBs and metals.

Starting in 1997, soil sampling and building interior sampling of residences located near the site on Spicer Avenue and Delmore Avenue found low level PCB contamination. As a result, EPA has performed removal actions and remedial actions, and potentially responsible parties performed additional actions to cleanup PCBs on these residential properties.

Prior to implementation of an EPA removal action, described below, surface water runoff from the site entered an unnamed tributary of the Bound Brook. PCB contamination has been found in in sediments downstream of the site, and fish collected from the Bound Brook as part of an EPA study were found to contain unacceptable levels of PCBs. As a result, NJDEP issued a Fish Advisory and posted signs warning people not to eat fish taken from the brook. An ecological risk assessment conducted by EPA for the Bound Brook corridor near the site determined that the stream ecosystem was at risk from chemical contamination.

Cleanup Approach

The site is being addressed in multiple stages: removal actions and long term remedial phases directed at cleanup of the entire site.

Response Action Status

Removal Actions: In March 1997, after identifying PCB-contaminated areas in the unpaved industrial park, EPA issued an Administrative Order to the property owner to take the following actions: (1) limit access to areas of known PCB contamination; (2) take necessary actions to limit the movement of contaminants to the Bound Brook through surface water run-off; and (3) pave driveways and parking areas within the industrial park. This action was completed in the fall of 1997. In March-April 1998, EPA completed a removal action to clean the interiors of residential homes located near the

Site where PCBs were found indoors at levels of potential concern. Beginning in 1998, EPA directed PRPs to remove and dispose of contaminated soil from fourteen residential properties located near the site, under a series of separate Administrative Orders. Removal activities required under the first two orders were completed by January 2000. Removal activities under a third order were completed in September 2004 by EPA, when one of the PRPs failed to perform the work.

In October 2008, after additional sediment samples collected in the Bound Brook adjacent to the former CDE facility revealed an increase in PCB concentrations and an increase in capacitor debris, an interim measure was initiated to stabilize areas of the Brook that may be eroding.

Entire Site: In April 2000, EPA began the Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study for the site. EPA's investigations have included sampling on-site soil and buildings, soil from adjacent residential properties, groundwater, sediments and surface water in the Bound Brook corridor. Initial field investigations were completed in October 2000. To expedite the cleanup of the site, EPA divided the site into separate phases, or operable units. EPA issued a Record of Decision to address contaminated soils at residential, municipal, and commercial properties in the vicinity of the former facility (Operable Unit 1, or OU1) in September 2003. Portions of this remedy have already been completed.

In September 2004, a Record of Decision for the second operable unit (OU2), addressing the remediation of the 25-acre former CDE facility, including contaminated soils and buildings, was issued. The first phase of this remedy (dismantling the on-site buildings) began in September 2007 and was completed in May 2008. Excavation of an area of buried debris, known as the "capacitor disposal area" began in February 2008 and was completed in June 2008.

The RI/FSs for the contaminated groundwater (OU3) and contaminated sediments in the Bound Brook (OU4) are ongoing.

Cleanup Progress

The initial emergency response (constructing a fence to limit site access, fixing surface water run-off problems, and paving driveways and parking areas within the industrial park) reduced the potential for exposure to and off-site migration of hazardous materials while site studies could be performed. Since they were installed in 1997, these site control features have been maintained and upgraded by the property owner, under EPA's direction.

Removing PCB contamination from nearby residential lots removed the potential for exposure to PCBs on these properties. EPA has recently completed remedial actions to remove contaminated soil at four additional properties, pursuant to the 2003 Record of Decision, bringing the total number of off-site property cleanups to 18. The 2003 remedy also required additional investigations to screen a small group of homes, to assure that no other off-site properties need to be addressed. These investigations began in 2008.

As required by the OU2 remedy for the 25-acre facility, EPA began relocating tenants from the industrial park in October 2006, and initiated the building demolition in January 2007. As of July 2007, all of the tenants at the industrial park have been relocated. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is providing day-to-day field management of the OU2 remedy for EPA, and Severson Environmental Services, Inc., is the prime contractor. In May 2008, demolition of the 18 buildings at the industrial park was completed. Excavation of the "capacitor disposal area," an area of buried debris and the most highly contaminated portion of the site, was completed in June 2008. The current phase of the OU2 remedy addresses contaminated soils that will be treated on site by low temperature thermal desorption. The remedial design for this component of the remedy was completed in September 2008. On-site treatment of contaminated soils by low temperature thermal desorption began in November 2009. The Cornell site received American Resource and Recovery Act (ARRA) funding in fiscal year 2009. The \$30 million in ARRA funding for this site is being used to accelerate the cleanup of the contaminated soil and debris, which are principal threat wastes, at the former CDE facility. Mobilization for the initiation of field activities occurred in August 2009. As reported in recovery.gov, approximately 50 jobs were created at this site during the current reporting period. For additional information regarding jobs created please refer to the recovery.gov website.

Site Repositories

South Plainfield Library, 2484 Plainfield Avenue, South Plainfield.