

# Atlantic Wood Industries, Inc

## EPA Region 3

Virginia

Portsmouth

7 miles from the

Chesapeake Bay

on the South Branch of

the Elizabeth River

**EPA ID#** VAD990710410 July 2002

**4th** Congressional District

**Last Update:**

**Other Names:**

Atlantic Creosote

## Current Site Status

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is overseeing the cleanup at the Atlantic Wood Industries site where bioremediation, the use of biological agents, or thermal desorption will treat most of the soil and sediment, subject to successful treatability results of the technology. Once treated, the soil and sediment would be backfilled onsite. Other soil/sediment would be disposed of offsite. Pumping new and existing recovery wells will recover liquid contamination from the groundwater. The agency has conducted an investigation to collect additional data, which will be used to design the appropriate treatment system. The new data indicate that contamination at the site is more extensive and more complex than the original Remedial Investigation indicated. As a result, EPA is in the process of performing a Focused Feasibility Study (FFS) to evaluate other remedies for cleaning up the site. Following the completion of the FFS, EPA will hold a public meeting

to have public participation in the remedy selection. Next, a Record of Decision Amendment approving the selected remedy will be produced. This will be followed by the design of the new remedy and the construction of the system to cleanup this phase of the project. EPA has begun the next phase of the project, the remedial investigation of contaminated ground water at the Site. EPA, the U.S. Navy, a responsible party (PRP) at the site, and Atlantic Wood Ind. Inc.(AWI), a PRP, are preparing to remove Acetylene Sludge from the southern border of the site. The removal action should be completed by early July 2002. In June 2002, EPA completed an ecological risk assessment of a portion of the Elizabeth River, which is located along the eastern border of ths Site.

## **Site Description**

The Atlantic Wood Industries, Inc. (AWII) site occupies 47.5 acres of land on the industrialized waterfront area of Portsmouth, Virginia. Adjacent to the site is the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, a Virginia Electric Power right-of-way, property occupied by the Portsmouth City School, and the South Branch of the Elizabeth River. The site is an inactive wood-treating facility that was in operation from 1926 to 1992. The site was used predominately for creosote and pentachlorophenol wood preserving purposes during its history. However, the site was also used to store treated lumber and disposal of wastes from plant operations and the Norfolk Naval Shipyard. Approximately 14,000 people work within a ½-mile radius of the site. The water supply for a three-mile radius area is provided by public utilities. Groundwater within the three-mile radius is not used as a drinking-water source. The site is on the Elizabeth River, about seven miles from the Chesapeake Bay. This site is being addressed through federal and potentially responsible parties' (PRPs) actions. Under EPA oversight, a PRP completed a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) at the site in 1995. Results of the RI/FS indicate areas of high levels of contamination in on-site soils and sediments in the South Branch of the Elizabeth River. Creosote products from former wood-treating processes have also been detected in the soils.

## **Site Responsibility**


Cleanup of this site is the responsibility of the Federal government and parties potentially responsible for site contamination.

## **NPL Listing History**

Our country's most serious, uncontrolled, or abandoned hazardous waste sites can be cleaned using federal money. To be eligible for federal cleanup money, a site must be put on the National Priorities List. This site was proposed to the list on June 10, 1986 and was formally added to the list on February 21, 1990.

## **Threats and Contaminants**

The RI/FS was completed at this site in 1995. Results of the RI/FS indicated areas of high levels of contamination in on-site soils and sediment in the South Branch of the Elizabeth River. Creosote products from former wood-treating processes have been detected in the soils. Polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), pentachlorophenol (PCP), polychlorinated dibenzodioxins (PCDDs), polychlorinated dibenzofurans (PCDFs), and metals contamination (arsenic, chromium, and zinc) have been detected in soils, groundwater, surface water, and sediments. A baseline risk assessment indicated that exposure to soils from direct contact or accidental ingestion is potentially harmful to on-site workers. In addition, studies by the Virginia Institute of Marine Science have shown that oysters within this reach have accumulated significant levels of creosotes. Given the levels of contamination in river sediments, there may be a risk to many biological organisms that live near the site.

Contaminant descriptions and associated risk factors are available on the Agency for Toxic Substance and Disease Registry, an arm of the CDC, web site at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/hazdat.html> 

## **Cleanup Progress**

RI/FS sampling results indicated that contaminants associated with wood treatment had migrated into a storm sewer and transported to a storm sewer inlet at the northeast corner of the site. As a result, EPA negotiated with a potentially responsible party (PRP) to undertake actions to install a liner within the storm sewer pipeline to prevent site contaminants from entering into the pipeline and migrate to the river. This work was completed in Spring 1995. In addition, approximately

660 cubic yards of contaminated inlet sediment were excavated and replaced with clean fill. A Record of Decision (ROD) was signed on September 29, 1995, to address remediation of contaminated soil and sediment. Most of the soil and sediment will be treated using engineered land treatment or thermal desorption treatment. Once treated it would be backfilled onsite. Other soil/sediment would be disposed of offsite. Non-aqueous product would be recovered from the subsurface by pumping the product out by new and existing recovery wells. The Remedial Design (RD) is currently being performed using federal funds. A pre-remedial design investigation, a part of the RD, was recently completed. The new information collected indicates that the contamination is more complex and more extensive than the RI/FS indicated. Therefore, EPA is in the process of performing a FFS to evaluate technologies that can be used to clean up this phase of the project. An additional investigation is underway to address the extent of contamination of groundwater. EPA, the Navy, and AWI are preparing to remove Acetylene Sludge from the southern border of the site. In June 2002, EPA completed an ecological risk assessment of a portion of the Elizabeth River, which is located along the eastern border of the Site.

## **Contacts**

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The detailed Administrative Record can be examined at the following

locations:

Portsmouth Public Library  
601 Court Street  
Portsmouth, VA 23704

Kirn Memorial Library  
301 E. City Hall Ave  
Norfolk, VA 23501

Chesapeake Library  
298 Cedar Road  
Chesapeake, VA 23320

U.S. EPA Region III  
6h Floor Docket Room  
1650 Arch St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19103  
(215) 814-3157

Please call to schedule an appointment.