



Occidental Chemical Corp./Firestone Superfund Site Fact Sheet

October
2005

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency ~ Region 3

Background Information:

The Occidental Chemical Superfund Site is located on the 267-acre property of the former Occidental Chemical plant, along the Schuylkill River. The site is in Lower Pottsgrove Township, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. The Superfund site consists of four unlined waste lagoons and contaminated groundwater, which lies under the site.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) began investigating the site in 1985. On-site soils and groundwater under the site were contaminated with chemicals that had been used on-site since 1950. The chemicals that EPA are concerned with are mostly volatile organic chemicals (VOCs). Some of these include vinyl chloride, trichloroethylene (TCE) and trans-1,2-dichloroethene. You can find more information on these contaminants on the Internet at www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.

There are two areas EPA plans to cleanup at the Occidental Superfund Site:
1) the four unlined earthen lagoons, and
2) contaminated groundwater under the site.

In 1993, EPA signed a legal document known as a Record of Decision (ROD).^{*} The ROD specified actions to address the unlined earthen lagoons and the groundwater contamination.

^{*} The Record of Decision (ROD) is available at the Pottstown Public Library and on the Internet at: www.epa.gov/arweb. Select "PA" for state, "Occidental Chemical Corp./Firestone" for Site and "Remedial - 01" for AR Type. Click "Search" and then "Search Results." The ROD is on the last page of the documents.

Lagoon Cleanup Progress:

In accordance with the ROD, EPA allowed Occidental Chemical Corporation to try to dry and purify the vinyl chloride that was in the waste materials in the four unlined earthen lagoons. However, two separate drying attempts were unsuccessful. EPA sampled the lagoons after the drying attempts and used the results of the sampling to do a health risk evaluation of the lagoons.

Based on the result of the health risk evaluation, EPA determined that a study, called a Focused Feasibility Study (FFS), was needed to evaluate cleanup options for the lagoons. In May of 2005, EPA sent letters to the Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) for the site to inform them of this decision. Occidental began negotiations with EPA shortly afterwards.

On October 12, 2005, EPA and Occidental entered into a 'Administrative Settlement Agreement and Order on Consent' to conduct the FFS. By the end of 2005, EPA expects Occidental to submit a work plan outlining the terms, conditions and schedule for implementing the FFS. The information in the FFS will be used to reevaluate the remedial action for the earthen lagoons.

Site information is available on the Internet at:

www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/super/sites/PAD980229298/



Or contact EPA staff:

Maria de los A. Garcia
Remedial Project Manager
garcia.maria@epa.gov
1-800-352-1973, extension 4-3199

Wendy M. Jastremski
Community Involvement Coordinator
jastremski.wendy@epa.gov
1-800-352-1973, extension 4-5222

Occidental Chemical Corp./Firestone Superfund Site Fact Sheet, *page 2*

Groundwater Cleanup History:

In accordance with the ROD, Occidental finished construction needed for a groundwater treatment system (GWTS). From January of 1999 until the present, the groundwater under the site is pumped continuously toward the center of the site and then to a treatment system. The pumping action was designed to prevent movement of the contaminated groundwater from the site. The treated water is discharged to the local public-owned treatment works facility.

The local drinking water supply near the site is provided by a Pottstown municipal facility, which depends on water from the Schuylkill River. Drinking water is tested annually by the municipal facility to ensure its safety. In Chester County, drinking water comes either from a private residential well or the public water supply.

Update On Groundwater Cleanup:

EPA completed the study of the groundwater treatment system (GWTS). EPA made recommendations to ensure that the GWTS is preventing contaminated groundwater from traveling away from the site and to address soil contamination that contributes to groundwater contamination. Occidental submitted a plan last fall to address EPA's recommendations. As a result, Occidental installed additional groundwater monitoring wells, including two wells along the Schuylkill River.

This fall, Occidental will be conducting Soil Vapor Extraction (SVE) tests. The tests will evaluate SVE for use in cleaning up soil contamination in some areas on the site that are contributing to the groundwater contamination. The tests will last one month. SVE removes harmful chemicals, in the form of vapors, from the soil above the water table. Vapors are the gases

that form when chemicals evaporate. The vapors are extracted (removed) by applying a vacuum to pull the vapors out from the ground. SVE requires drilling extraction wells within the polluted area. These wells are drilled into the soil, but not the groundwater. Attached to the wells is equipment that creates a vacuum, which pulls air and vapors through the soil and up to the surface.

Special air pollution control equipment collects the vapors. The equipment separates the harmful vapors from the clean air. Then, the vapors stick to solid materials, in this case carbon material. When the carbon is "exhausted," it is sent out to a permitted off-site facility for re-generation, and fresh carbon is used. Air monitoring will be performed during the test. A report with data collected from the SVE test and groundwater monitoring well testing is expected to be completed by the end of 2005.

Residential Well Sampling Results:

Last year, EPA sampled water from 22 residential drinking water wells across the river from the site in East Coventry Township, Chester County, Pennsylvania. No site contamination was found in any of these wells, indicating that the contaminated groundwater is not moving off-site.

Technical Assistance Grant: \$\$\$

EPA awarded a TAG to Alliance for a Clean Environment (ACE) in 2001. The goal of the TAG program is to help your community understand the environmental conditions and cleanup activities at the Occidental Superfund Site. ACE uses the bulk of the TAG funds for the services of an independent technical advisor, Dr. Henry S. Cole. Dr. Cole helps ACE interpret and comment on site-related information. You can contact ACE via email at aceactivists@netzero.net.