



## Fruitland Magnesium Fire Incident

Release: June 27, 2016

### Unified Command Site Bulletin

The Unified Command consists of the US Environmental Protection Agency, the County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, and the Los Angeles County Fire Department.

### BACKGROUND

On June 14, 2016, a fire started in Maywood, CA. The fire burned Panda International Trading (PIT) located at 3570 Fruitland Avenue and a second business, Sokor Metals. Fruitland Avenue is a commercial/light manufacturing street and directly south of the facility is a residential neighborhood. PIT is a scrap metal yard that receives and sends scrap metal out in bulk for recovery. Sokor Metals recovers precious metals from circuit boards and other electronics.

During the fire, approximately 300 people south of the incident location between Maywood Ave. and Everett Ave. were evacuated. Residents on 52nd Street were under mandatory evacuation and residents south of 52<sup>nd</sup> Street were under voluntary evacuation. Residents on the south side of E. 52nd Street were allowed to return home on June 15, 2016, by LA County Fire Department. On June 16, 2016, the LA County Health Officer upheld the evacuation order for residents on the north side of E. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. These residents remain evacuated until testing and cleanup is complete. Evacuated residents have been temporarily moved to motels or are staying with friends or family members.

### TIMELINE OF RESPONSE

#### June 14, 2016

Agencies Present: US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), LA County Fire Department (LACoFD), Vernon Fire Department (VFD), Vernon Police Department (VPD), Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department (LASD), and South Coast Air Quality Management District (AQMD).

LACoFD responded to the fire and began defensive operations due to the presence of the magnesium. EPA and AQMD began air sampling.

Approximately 300 people were evacuated from their residences on and south of E. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street in Maywood. Evacuated residents were sheltered by the American Red Cross at the YMCA in Maywood.

**June 15, 2016**

Agencies Present: EPA, LACoFD, VFD, VPD, LASD and AQMD.

LACoFD continued firefighting operations. EPA began collecting ash samples for analysis of hazardous contaminants from the fire. Outdoor air sampling continued. In the evening, LACoFD met with evacuees at the YMCA to inform residents who lived on the south side of E. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street that they may return to their residences.

**June 16, 2016**

Agencies Present: EPA, LACoFD, County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health (DPH), VFD, VPD, LASD and AQMD

Firefighting operations completed. Outdoor air sampling continued around the facility and in the community. EPA collected indoor air samples of two residences close to the facility.

LACoFD conducted a basic external decontamination of the residences, street and sidewalks along the north side of E. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street. They used a fire hose to rinse areas, and collected the water for disposal. The Vernon Fire Department (VFD) conducted similar operations at businesses downwind of the facility.

DPH issued a health order for the mandatory evacuation of residents on the north side of 52<sup>nd</sup> Street.

**June 17, 2016**

Agencies Present: EPA, LACoFD, DPH, VFD, VPD, and LASD

Unified Command continued to clean the sidewalks along Fruitland Avenue and removed contaminated fire-suppression water to prevent movement off-site. Drainage culverts were also cleaned.

Two more residences were sampled for indoor air quality. Outdoor air sampling continued.

Two public meetings were held for the evacuated residents at the YMCA in Maywood, CA. Nearly 40 residents were in attendance. Unified Command talked about the events and explained the hazards that are preventing them from going home. The also explained that it is their top priority to get families back into their residences as soon as possible. Speakers at the meeting included Supervisor Hilda Solis from the LA County Board of Supervisors, the City of Maywood, the LA County Department of Social Services, and the American Red Cross. The first factsheet, in English and in Spanish, was given to residents.

**June 18, 2016**

Agencies Present: EPA, LACoFD, DPH, VFD, VPD, and LASD

Unified Command responders continued cleaning drainage culverts and ash on Fruitland Avenue. The indoor air in two more residences were sampled bringing the total of residences sampled to six. Two more public meetings for evacuated residents were held at the YMCA in Maywood, CA. Displaced families were relocated from the YMCA shelter to local motels, debit cards were distributed, and the shelter was closed.

**June 19, 2016**

Agencies Present: EPA, US Coast Guard (USCG), LACoFD, DPH, VFD, VPD, LASD and the CA Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)

Cars parked on the north side of E. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street were cleaned with a low-pressure wash down. The pavement of the street was high-pressure washed. Vehicle owners were provided vouchers for a car wash at a local facility. Outdoor air sampling continued.

The U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) arrived to provide assistance to the Unified Command with site safety and response planning.

The Unified Command Community Relations Team (CRT), led by DPH, continued to support resident needs for housing, food, and incidentals. Community Relations teams met with families at their hotel residences to answer any questions regarding their health and to inquire about their needs.

**June 20, 2016**

Agencies Present: EPA, USCG, LACoFD, DPH, VFD, VPD, LASD and DTSC

Work began to stabilize the facility to prevent migration of contaminants and ash, so the investigation of the facility and fire could begin.

Based on the damages and ash present around a number of residences, Unified Command began planning and assessment for outdoor cleanup operations for residential properties. Outdoor air sampling continued.

CRT continued to connect with displaced families to provide support for evacuated residents and to link residents to services such as medical and mental health, as well as addressing their needs for housing, food, and incidentals. Families were visited by CRT at their temporary hotel residences.

**June 21, 2016**

Agencies Present: EPA, USCG, LACoFD, DPH, VFD, VPD, LASD and DTSC

To stabilize burned debris on the impacted facility, EPA contractors began applying a sealant to the burn impacted area. Small pockets of ash continue to be collected from streets as they are found. Preparations continued for conducting indoor air sampling in more residential properties and planning for outdoor cleanups continued. Outdoor air sampling continued.

The Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors declared a local emergency. This declaration was made to help free up funding for food, shelter and other assistance for the displaced families.

A public meeting was held at the local YMCA for evacuated residents. Attendees received information about resources that may be available from the American Red Cross, the LA County Departments of Public Social Services, Mental Health and other entities.

Displaced families continued to connect with the CRT.

#### **June 22, 2016**

Agencies Present: EPA, USCG, LACoFD, DPH, VFD, LASD, and DTSC

Unified Command continued to clean up residual ash on E. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street, and conducted indoor air sampling of 4 residences. Outdoor air sampling continued, along with cleanup of residual ash found on the streets.

Displaced families continued to connect with CRT and continued to support resident needs for services, housing, food, and incidentals. The CRT started utilizing mass texting to communicate consistent messages in English and Spanish to all residents. Families were visited by the CRT at their temporary hotel residences. The CRT coordinated food distribution and transportation provided by the Salvation Army and coordinated by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

#### **June 23, 2016**

Agencies Present: EPA, USCG, LACoFD, DPH, VFD, VPD, LASD, and DTSC

Cleanup of residual ash on E. 52<sup>nd</sup> Street continued, and indoor air sampling was completed at 11 residences. Outdoor air sampling continued.

A structural engineer was on site to assess the structural integrity of the remaining structures on the burned facility. The purpose of this assessment was to assist in determination of next steps in cleanup and stabilization of the facility.

Displaced families continued to connect with CRT for housing, food, and debit card assistance. The CRT coordinated food distribution provided by the Salvation Army and coordinated by the Office of Emergency Management (OEM).

### **Sampling Results**

**Air:** During the fire, air samples were taken by both the South Coast Air Quality Management District and EPA. The samples showed elevated levels of particulates commonly associated with smoke, and trace levels of heavy metals including copper, zinc, chromium, cadmium and lead. EPA has continued to sample outdoor air since the fire was put out; results have shown decreasing levels of contaminants resulting from the fire.

**Ash:** Only preliminary results of the collected ash are currently available, but as expected, high concentrations of magnesium, aluminum, and iron were found. Additionally, traces of heavy metals, including copper, barium and zinc were also found in ash. The extent and volume of potential contamination due to the ash, as well as the threats to public health, have not yet been determined.

**Soil:** The soil in the yards of residences potentially impacted by the fire are being sampled. Results are pending.

### **Response Accomplishments (Updated 6/25/16)**

Households Re-occupied	0
Relocated Residences	46
Total People Relocated (estimate)	204
Indoor Air Samples Conducted	11
Indoor Air Sampling Results	0
Yards Sampled	14
Yard Sampling Results	0