

Community Update

February 2019

Public participation is essential to the success of EPA's community involvement program. If you have any questions, please contact:

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Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is continuing to make progress in its ongoing cleanup and assessment of the Tonawanda Coke Corporation (TCC) facility in Tonawanda, N.Y. TCC ceased operations at the facility on October 14, 2018 and has permanently vacated the site. EPA, the lead agency responsible for the site, is using its short-term authority under Superfund to assess the TCC facility and perform cleanup activities. During the recent government shutdown in January 2019, cleanup activities continued without interruption because of the nature of the work that was being performed and the need to keep certain systems operating at the facility. EPA's current work at the site is expected to continue over many months due to the size and complexity of the facility. A site contingency plan has been created and shared with first responders and will be updated as site conditions change.

Assessing and Managing Risks

Some potential risks identified at the facility include flammable or potentially explosive substances stored onsite, hazardous substances discharged onto the soil, and improperly stored materials including acids and solvents. As part of the assessment, EPA has secured the site, managed utilities to the facility, found and mitigated releases in specific areas, maintained and monitored the two systems that treat plant process water and storm water generated at the site, inventoried all the bulk tanks and vessels onsite, winterized equipment and pipes, and commenced an evaluation of additional cleanup needs that may be required in the short- or long-term. EPA has also collected samples of contaminated media for analysis and continues to keep the facility secure.

EPA Cleanup Activities to Date

In addition to continuing to assess conditions at the site, EPA has excavated and properly stored 83 cubic yards of contaminated soil in preparation for shipping the material offsite for disposal. EPA has successfully treated more than one million gallons of contaminated wastewater remaining from the plant shutdown, and has moved and safely stored in secure areas over one hundred containers of chemicals found scattered throughout the site. EPA continues to remove and clean contaminated sludge in sumps at the site, and take these sumps out of service.

The shutdown of the boiler plant and ammonia lines was completed in late December 2018. As part of the shutdown process, EPA drained and emptied all tanks and lines associated with the boiler house operations, including the water pretreatment system and purged the ammonia lines. EPA closed the boiler plant and had domestic water service turned off to all structures on the facility except for the locker rooms, office area (command post), and security facility.

EPA continues to remove coal and coke from the facility, with about 4,300 tons already removed. EPA cleaned floors contaminated with chemicals in several buildings open to the elements and mitigated other areas contaminated with chemicals to prevent the release of the contaminants to the environment.

For more information, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/ny/tonawanda-coke-corporation-tcc-site>



In May 2017, EPA established a task force to restore the Superfund program to its rightful place at the center of the Agency's core mission to protect health and the environment.

epa.gov/superfund/superfund-task-force