

# NPL Site Narrative for Diaz Chemical Corporation

## DIAZ CHEMICAL CORPORATION Holley, New York

**Conditions at Proposal (March 8, 2004):** The Diaz Chemical Corporation ("Diaz") is a former chemical manufacturing facility with a long history of releases into a neighboring residential community. An air release from a non-permitted emission point in January 2002 left solidified drops containing 2-chloro-6-fluorophenol (CFP) on residential and public property, including houses, cars and a swing set, as far as 0.31 mile east-northeast of the facility. The release produced odors reported as far as 12 miles away. In addition to CFP, other phenolic compounds and toluene were present in the released chemical mixture. Residential neighbors complained of odors and respiratory and other ailments associated with the release. Direct observations document this observed release of a CERCLA hazardous substance to the air pathway.

The 5.5-acre, wedge-shaped Diaz facility is located at 40 Jackson Street in the Village of Holley, Orleans County, New York, approximately 25 miles west of Rochester. Before its use by Diaz, the property was used for food processing and cider vinegar production from 1890 until 1974. From 1974 until June 2003, Diaz manufactured and stored intermediate organic chemicals for the pharmaceutical, agricultural, photographic, color and dye, and personal care products industries. The company specialized in the production of halogenated aromatic compounds. When Diaz filed for bankruptcy and abandoned the facility in June 2003, the company left behind a multitude of chemicals in drums and tanks.

Before the January 2002 air release, Diaz had a long history of releases to the environment from its facility. A nitric and sulfuric acid release in January 1977 caused eye and skin irritation in affected residents. Other compounds that were spilled to the ground or released to the air between 1977 and 1999 included the herbicides lactofen and trifluralin, nitrogen, potassium hydroxide, methanol, tetraethyl ammonium bromide, bromoacetophenone, dimethyl sulfoxide gas, ethyl chloropropane, bromine, hexane, process water and sludge, triethylamine, acetic anhydride, acetic acid, para-chlorobenzotrifluoride (PCBTF), ferric chloride anhydrous, dichlorobenzotrifluoride, dibromobenzene, and 3,4-dimethoxytoluene.

On January 5, 2002, Diaz employees overheated a reactor vessel, its safety valve ruptured and released 75 gallons of chemical mixture through a non-permitted emission point. The release consisted of CFP, related phenolic compounds, and toluene. The splash zone for the release extended northeast of the facility into the neighboring residential community. As a result of the release, Diaz partially funded the relocation of 15 to 20 families from their homes near the plant to hotels, motels, and apartments. CFP was detected in the urine of some of those displaced residents. Subsequent EPA inspections in March, June, and August 2002 revealed that Diaz was operating without appropriate safeguards to protect its employees and the surrounding residential community.

From 1994 to 1999, Diaz conducted a six-phase Remedial Investigation (RI) under the guidance of New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). The RI results revealed soils and ground water on the property and nearby contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOC) and semivolatile organic compounds (SVOC). Contaminants detected in soil and ground water include 1,2-

dichloroethane (a.k.a. ethylene dichloride, or EDC); vinyl chloride; 1,2-dibromoethane (EDB); benzene; xylene; ethylbenzene; and a number of brominated chemical intermediates. EPA is maintaining a ground water treatment system on site designed to address migration of subsurface contamination. The nearest municipal drinking water supply well is located 0.66 mile south of the site.

**Status (July 2004):** To date, EPA has removed 2400 drums and 40,000 gallons of bulk chemicals from the site. Residents dislocated from their homes following the January 2002 chemical release continue to receive relocation assistance from EPA.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.