

# NPL Site Narrative for Sharon Steel Corp (Fairmont Coke Works)

## SHARON STEEL CORP (FAIRMONT COKE WORKS) Fairmont, West Virginia

**Conditions at Proposal (June 1996):** The Sharon Steel Corporation (Fairmont Coke Works) site is located at the end of Curtis Avenue in the northeast portion of the City of Fairmont, Marion County, West Virginia. The facility was originally built and operated by the Standard Oil Company in 1920 for the production of coke and the refinement of its associated by-products. In 1948, Sharon Steel Corporation purchased the property and continued coke production operations. Sharon Steel utilized the semi-indirect process for coke generation involving the combustion of coal to produce coke and its by-products; by-products associated with this process included coal tar, phenol, ammonium sulfate, benzene, toluene, xylene, and coke oven gas. Operations at the Sharon Steel site ceased on May 30, 1979 as a result of Clean Water Act and Clean Air Act suits filed by the EPA.

The total area of the plant is estimated to be 107 acres, 57 of which were utilized for coke production processes, and waste disposal and treatment operations. Surrounding land use is a mixture of industrial, commercial, and residential properties. Big John's Salvage Company, another EPA Superfund site, is located to the north of the site, while numerous residential and commercial properties border the site to the north and east.

Throughout plant operations, wastes generated during the coke production process were disposed in onsite locations. The fine residual dust known as breeze, and considered unusable, was often mixed with waste tar for solidification purposes and placed in the breeze pile. Results for samples collected from the breeze washout area reveal the presence of cyanide and numerous polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons including benzo(a)pyrene and benzo(a)anthracene.

During normal plant operations, accumulated sludge was periodically excavated from the two oxidation ponds and stored in two pits adjacent to the respective ponds. Primary concerns at the site include the offsite migration of contaminants via surface water, and the exposure of people who may come into direct contact with onsite materials. Surface water drainage at this site generally flows one of two paths, commonly labelled the northern and southern drainageways. In addition to the northern and southern drainageways, a small intermittent stream originates at the base of the western tip of the north landfill, and flows offsite, eventually joining with the unnamed tributary to the Monongahela River. Area communities draw drinking water from this river. This stream reportedly receives runoff from the neighboring Big John's Salvage Company site. Other evidence of offsite contamination attributable to this site involves the migration of breeze onto two adjacent residential properties.

Following closure of the plant in 1979, Sharon Steel procured contractors to prepare and design the remedial measures necessary to abandon the facility. The site has remained inactive since this closure, but no plans were submitted which could be agreed upon by both Sharon Steel officials and the EPA. Since no acceptable measures were taken to clean up the facility, the EPA initiated a removal action in May 1993 designed to clean up and stabilized the site.

**Status (December 1996):** The EPA removal action that was initiated in May 1993 was completed in August 1996. This action mainly included engineered controls of surface water runoff; consolidation and stabilization (capping) of the north landfill; excavation and off-site disposal of tank and oxidation ponds contents; and completion of an extent of contamination study.

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.