

NPL Site Narrative for Ambler Asbestos Piles

AMBLER ASBESTOS PILES Ambler, Pennsylvania

Conditions at proposal (October 15, 1984): Two asbestos piles -- the Plant Pile and the Locust Street Pile -- cover about 15 acres in a residential area of Ambler, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. In 1867, Keasbey & Mattison Co., manufacturers of asbestos products, began dumping its waste next to its Ambler plant. In 1962, the plant was divided and purchased by Nicolet, Inc., and CertainTeed Corp., also manufacturers of asbestos products. Nicolet pumped waste water containing asbestos from settling ponds into diked areas, creating wet asbestos piles which gradually dried as new diked areas were constructed and filled. CertainTeed dumped predominately broken wallboard and asbestos pipe products, which were periodically further broken by compaction with tractors. The total volume of asbestos-contaminated waste in the piles is estimated to exceed 1.5 million cubic yards.

In 1971, Nicolet applied for a permit from the State to continue using the Locust Street Pile for waste disposal. In 1972, CertainTeed applied for a permit for a portion of the Plant Pile which was on its property. In 1974, the State denied the permit applications and issued orders to both companies to cease dumping and to stabilize and cover the piles. CertainTeed signed a Consent Order and agreed to follow the State's order. Nicolet refused to comply.

In 1983, EPA found asbestos in the soil and on equipment in the Locust Street playground, which is adjacent to Nicolet's pile. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the Pennsylvania Department of Health certified the pile as presenting an immediate threat to the public. In 1983-84, EPA committed \$935,670 in CERCLA emergency funds to cover Nicolet's piles with soil and to establish vegetation. EPA obtained a court order for entry onto the site. Work has been completed except for installation of a drainage system and reseeding.

Status (June 10, 1986): EPA completed its emergency activities at the site in May 1985.

EPA is developing a workplan for an enforcement-lead remedial investigation/feasibility study to determine the extent of contamination at the site and identify alternatives for remedial action. The workplan was completed early in 1986. Nicolet is considering if it wants to perform the remedial investigation/feasibility 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/toxfaq/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.