

NPL Site Narrative for Cal West Metals (USSBA)

CAL WEST METALS (USSBA) Lemitar, New Mexico

Conditions at proposal (June 24, 1988): The Cal West Metals (USSBA) Site covers 43.8 acres approximately 0.5 mile north of Lemitar, Socorro County, New Mexico. After the company, also known as ARCA Engineering, defaulted on a loan, the U.S. Small Business Administration (USSBA) and the United New Mexico Bank of Socorro foreclosed on the property on October 22, 1985. This site is being proposed for the NPL as a Federal facility site.

During 1979-81, Cal West Metals processed approximately 20,000 automobile batteries to recover lead. During 1982-84, the company conducted research and development on various aspects of raw materials recovery and in 1985 reworked the waste piles from the battery recycling operation to recover lead.

The New Mexico Environmental Improvement Division (NMEID) detected lead in on-site monitoring wells in October 1984. An estimated 1,000 people obtain drinking water from public and private wells within 3 miles of the site. NMEID also found lead in water and sediments in drainage pathways leading from the site. Approximately 600 acres of food and forage crops are irrigated by surface water within 3 miles downstream of the site.

In an August 1985 inspection, NMEID found about 300 drums containing lead oxide and sulfuric acid, uncovered piles of battery pieces, and an evaporation pond on the site. Lead concentrations in the wastes ranged from 54,500 to 424,000 parts per million. In October 1986, NMEID detected lead in surface soils up to 400 feet downwind of the site. The lead probably came from the uncovered waste piles.

In August 1986, EPA issued an order to the owner/operators under Section 3008(a) of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) for failure to operate and maintain the facility in compliance with RCRA hazardous waste management requirements. On July 15, 1987, a Consent Agreement and Final Order was signed, which set out a specific compliance schedule.

Status (March 13, 1989): EPA has evaluated the site and determined that emergency action is not warranted at this time.

The owner/operators have not complied with the Consent Agreement.

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.