

NPL Site Narrative for Southern California Edison Co. (Visalia Poleyard)

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA EDISON CO. (VISALIA POLEYARD) Visalia, California

Conditions at proposal (January 22, 1987): Southern California Edison Co. (SCE) treated utility poles on a 20-acre site in Visalia, Tulare County, California, from the 1920s until 1980. The site is on the edge of town in a primarily agricultural area with some scattered industry and houses.

Wood preservatives, including creosote and pentachlorophenol (PCP), were used and stored on-site during the poleyard's operations. Leaking tanks and stored treated poles have contaminated ground water and soil with wood-treatment chemicals, as well as associated hexa-, hepta-, and octachlorodioxins and furans, according to analyses conducted by both the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (CRWQCB) and SCE.

California Water Service Co. wells within 3 miles of the site supply drinking water to Visalia's 62,000 residents. After sampling ground water and soil in May 1976, CRWQCB issued a Cleanup and Abatement Order requiring SCE to (1) abate discharge of treating fluids into soil, (2) contain contaminated soil and water on the property, (3) pump shallow ground water under the site before and during construction of an underground slurry wall around the site, (4) pump the lower confined aquifer to remove contamination, and (5) clean up contaminated shallow ground water off-site.

In response to the order, SCE removed 2,300 cubic yards of grossly contaminated soil to an approved Class I hazardous waste disposal facility. The remaining soil was not sampled after the cleanup. In 1977, a 60-foot-deep cement-bentonite slurry wall was constructed to slow lateral migration in the shallow aquifer. Currently, SCE is pumping the shallow wells, treating the water by carbon filtration, and discharging it into the city sewer system. SCE has been sampling monitoring wells, along with California Water Service Co. wells, on a quarterly basis. The results indicate that on-site monitoring wells contain up to 12 parts per million (ppm) PCP, and off-site monitoring wells contain up to 0.15 ppm PCP.

Status (March 31, 1989): The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) is overseeing SCE's investigations and cleanup activities at the site. In December 1987, SCE and CDHS signed an Enforceable Agreement requiring SCE to perform a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) to determine the type and extent of contamination at the site and identify alternatives for remedial action. CDHS is reviewing SCE's draft RI/FS and risk assessment.

SCE has upgraded its on-site ground water treatment system to include anthracite filtration in addition to carbon filtration. SCE now discharges the treated ground water directly to Mill Creek, a small tributary about two blocks from the site, under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit overseen by CRWQCB. Concern arose in mid-1987 when hepta- and octa-dioxins suddenly appeared and rose in the effluent from the on-site treatment system. CRWQCB oversaw measures to address this problem. The rising levels may have implied an increase of PCP leaving the soil and entering ground water, or may also simply have been due to filter overloading.

Currently, monitoring wells on-site show relatively stable levels of PCP and creosote, generally ranging from not detectable to 1,500 parts per billion.

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.