

# NPL Site Narrative for AMCO Chemical

## AMCO CHEMICAL Oakland, California

**Conditions at Proposal (April 30, 2003):** The AMCO Chemical site (AMCO) is part of a 0.83-acre property at 1414 Third Street in a mixed residential and light industrial area of Oakland, California. The property is bordered on the north by a vacant lot, on the west by residences, on the east by Nelson Mandela Parkway, and on the south by Third Street. A recently constructed elevated portion of the Interstate-880 (I-880) freeway is located immediately across Third Street from the property. The property (at 1401 Third Street) was historically occupied by Bobo's Junkyard.

From the 1960s to 1989, the AMCO site was occupied by AMCO Chemical Company. AMCO operated a chemical distribution facility that included a warehouse, railroad spur, above-ground tanks, underground tanks, and drums used to transfer and store raw materials. In July 1988, the Oakland Fire Department observed "leaking/rotting drums" on the property. A subsequent emergency response investigation by Alameda County and the U.S. Coast Guard revealed greater than 100 full and empty 5- and 55-gallon weathered drums in an open area behind AMCO Chemical's main building. Stenciled labels on the drums indicated that the contents included acetone; 1,1,1-trichloroethane (1,1,1-TCA); methyl ethyl ketone; and dry-cleaning solvent. From 1989 to November 1998, DC Metals operated a scrap metal yard on the site. Cable Moore, Inc., currently uses the site for cable storage. Structures remaining on site include an office building, warehouse, and two small storage buildings.

In June 1995, a construction crew noted odors at the intersection of Third Street and Nelson Mandela Parkway, while excavating a trench needed to relocate an underground electrical line in preparation for a freeway project. Subsequent subsurface investigation by California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), DC Metals, and EPA revealed the presence of volatile organic compounds (VOCs) including vinyl chloride in soil, soil gas, and shallow ground water at the AMCO site, beneath Third Street, and at the 1401 Third Street property (former Bobo's Junkyard).

On December 5, 1996, the EPA Emergency Response Office initiated a removal action at the AMCO site that involved the construction of a ground water and soil vapor extraction (SVE) treatment system. The EPA treatment system collection trench was excavated from December 5 through December 20, 1996. By December 23, 1996, the trench had been lined with a silt curtain, filled with gravel, and covered with a tarp. Cement was poured to permanently cover the trench on January 8, 1997. The treatment system operated from January 1997 through July 1998 and extracted approximately 7,000 pounds of VOCs, approximately 40 pounds of which were vinyl chloride. Operation of the system ceased in July 1998, due to community concern over the potential for a release of dioxins from the thermal oxidation unit. On December 5 and 14, 1996, during construction of the treatment system collection trench, the EPA On-Scene Coordinator observed shimmering vapors emanating from the open trench. SUMMA (tm) canister sampling indicated the presence of vinyl chloride; methylene chloride; 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA); and trichloroethene (TCE) in the immediate area of the trench. In addition, one SUMMA canister sample collected from in front of a residence adjacent to the site contained TCE.

The EPA conducted several sampling events on and adjacent to the AMCO site between 1997 and 2000. VOCs continued to be detected in soil, soil gas, and ground water on site. In September 1999, SUMMA

canister samples were collected from the crawl spaces of three residences located adjacent to the site. Vinyl chloride was detected in the three crawl spaces at 0.02 to 0.045 parts per billion by volume (ppbv).

There are 626 people living within a quarter of a mile of the source. There are also approximately three workers on site.

**Status (September 2003):** EPA is considering various alternatives for this site.

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.