NPL Site Narrative for Harbor Oil

HARBOR OIL
Portland, Oregon

Conditions at Proposal (September 5, 2002): Harbor Oil is a waste oil reprocessing facility located on approximately 4.2 acres in an industrial area of Portland, Oregon. Site operations began in 1961. The site formerly also operated as a tank truck cleaning facility. In March 1974, there was a major spill or release of waste oil from on site storage tanks, which resulted in a fish kill in Force Lake. Following the spill, the work area at the Harbor Oil site was described by Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) staff as a mass of oil-soaked mud. ODEQ staff found Force Lake to be covered by a thin film of oil, and a thicker accumulation of oil, both fresh and decomposed, which had accumulated along the shorelines. In addition, in October 1979, a severe fire destroyed the facility and melted/ruptured five 20,000-gallon aboveground used oil tanks. The incident caused large volumes of used oils and smaller volumes of waste paints to flow west and south across the site, into the wetlands that border the site and Force Lake.

In 1980, following the fire, the facility was rebuilt and a new tank farm was constructed. Currently, the petroleum recovery process tanks consist of a 4,000-gallon diesel fuel storage tank; six 20,000-gallon heated storage tanks: six 20,000-gallon cold storage tanks; and 205,000-gallon and 320,000-gallon cold storage tanks. These tanks hold used petroleum products in varying stages of recovery.

Waste oils received at the facility are first transferred into heat tanks for dehydration, distillation, and blending. Following heat processing, the blended oils flow through an oil/water separator. The separated oils are transferred into settling tanks equipped with filters. The separated water is piped into a surge tank. Processed oils are transferred into storage tanks. Three on-site sumps collect surface water from general runoff and divert it to an on-site/oil/water separator. Treated stormwater from the oil/water separator is discharged into the wetlands west and south of the site via a permitted outfall located in the southwest corner of the site. An earthen dike installed in 1980 also surrounds the south and west sides of the site to direct surface water runoff to the collection sumps.

In July and August 2000, consultants for the EPA conducted a Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection at the facility. Historical documentation, sampling, and analytical results document the presence of several hazardous substances on-site including volatile organic compounds, semi-volatile organic compounds, metals, pesticides, and polychlorinated biphenyls. Contaminated soil was documented as a source of contamination.

The 15-mile target distance limit (TDL) for this site begins at a permitted outfall which is located in the wetlands west of the site and continues south for approximately 300 feet through the wetlands to Force Lake, and ends at the southern shore of this lake, a distance of approximately 0.2 miles. During most of the year, the lake is filled by springs and seeps. Drainage from Force Lake passes through numerous culverts and ultimately enters the Columbia Slough.

Force Lake supports recreational fishing activities. A large palustrine emergent seasonally flooded wetland having a perimeter of approximately 1.3 miles is located immediately west and south of the 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) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.