

NPL Site Narrative for White Chemical Corp.

WHITE CHEMICAL CORP. Newark, New Jersey

Conditions at Proposal (May 9, 1991): White Chemical Corp. occupies a 4.4-acre site at 660 Frelinghuysen Avenue in a densely populated residential/industrial section of Newark, Essex County, New Jersey. Acid chlorides and flame-retardant chemicals were manufactured on property owned by AZS Corp. from January 1984 to July 1990. Prior to May 1983, Lancaster Chemical Corp., a division of AZS, manufactured chemicals on the property. The site originally consisted of three major buildings, including laboratories, storerooms, and grounds. It is bounded by an industrial center to the north-northeast, a feather company to the west, a sportswear manufacturer to the south-southwest, and a Conrail line to the east-southeast.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) inspected the facility several times in 1989 and found numerous violations of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act. On March 15, 1990, NJDEP served White Chemical and AZS an Administrative Order and Notice of Civil Administrative Penalty Assessment for the noted violations. On May 8, 1990, NJDEP ordered White Chemical to secure the site and to pay for drum stabilization and removal. After the company failed to comply, NJDEP began a removal operation on May 15, 1990. NJDEP's inventory found (among other things) approximately 9,000 drums improperly stored on-site. According to the NJDEP inventory and the site owner, 915 contained scrubbing solution (water with xylene or trichloroethylene), 608 contained waste filter cake, 5,583 contained wastes that may be hazardous, 109 contained substances not classified, 1,673 were claimed to be empty, and 175 were considered to be products by White Chemical. NJDEP observed deteriorating drums leaking into the soil or eroding the pallets on which they were placed. NJDEP also observed spills of phosphoric acid, sulfuric acid, ethylene dichloride, and xylene. Water-reactive materials were stored outside where rain or humidity provided conditions for the materials to be released, and incompatible materials were stored next to each other. There were also 126 above ground tanks of a variety of sizes. Thousands of unsegregated lab-pack-size materials in various stages of deterioration are stored within the buildings on shelves that are also deteriorating.

By August 1990, NJDEP had removed approximately 1,000 drums. However, cleanup was halted when NJDEP ran out of funds (have expended approximately \$825,000). The State then called EPA for assistance in completing stabilization and removal actions at the site. Subsequently, EPA overpacked fuming drums of phosphorus tribromide for future disposal.

On September 28, 1990, EPA issued a Unilateral Administrative Order under CERCLA Section 104(e) (3) requiring White Chemical to stop all business activities and vacate the facility. The most serious threats to public health and the environment would result from a release to air of substances in unstable drums and other containers, and by fire and explosion and the associated release of contaminants to air. Approximately 12,000 people live and work within 1/4 mile of the site, 290,000 persons live within 3 miles of the site, and an unknown number of people work within this 3-mile radius. Given prevailing winds, a fire and explosion at White Chemical could seriously impact Newark International Airport, less than 1 mile to

the east, the Conrail line at the site's eastern boundary (the major eastern corridor for Amtrak and Conrail), and U.S. Routes 1 and 9 (between the rail line and the airport).

EPA removal staff continues to stabilize and secure the site. The removal action may take up to 18 months. In addition, EPA continues to assess site conditions and the quantities and types of materials present.

On November 21, 1990, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) of the U.S. Public Health Service issued an advisory warning that the site poses a significant threat to public health because of possible releases of hazardous substances to the air. Under Section 300.425(c)(3) of the National Contingency Plan, the Federal regulation by which CERCLA is implemented, a site can be placed on the NPL if (1) ATSDR has issued a public health advisory recommending that people be removed from the site, (2) EPA determines that the site poses a significant threat to public health, and (3) EPA anticipates that it will be more cost-effective to use its remedial authority (available only at NPL sites) than its emergency removal authority to respond to the site.

Status (September 1991): Most of the containers remain on-site, including approximately 12,000 laboratory-type containers, 6,700 drums, 126 tanks, and 10 gas cylinders. To date, EPA has removed 4,200 empty drums from the site. All drums have been staged and segregated. Sampling for disposal purposes is underway.

On July 11, 1991, EPA held a public meeting to present its "Focused Feasibility Study," which describes an early remedial action to deal with the surface contamination at the site. The remedial action is expected to start later in the year.

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.