

NPL Site Narrative for Ram Leather Care

RAM LEATHER CARE Charlotte, North Carolina

Conditions at Proposal (April 30, 2003): The Ram Leather Care site is a former dry cleaning facility located in Charlotte, North Carolina. The facility, which operated from 1977 to 1993, is situated in a rural area in eastern Mecklenburg County, about 1,500 feet west of the Cabarrus County line. A sample taken in 1991 from the facility's drinking water well, which served 8 to 10 employees at the time, showed tetrachloroethylene (PCE) at 4,690 micrograms per liter. As a result, use of the well was discontinued and a new well was installed. Later sampling has shown that this well also was contaminated. In addition, chlorinated solvents have been detected in residential wells near the facility. Ram Leather Care employees and nearby residents with contaminated wells were advised not to consume the ground water.

Illegal open burning of PCE filters was discovered at the Ram Leather Care facility in April 1991. Subsequently, 49 unmarked drums were discovered on a pad on the west side of the building. Drum bungs were found open, and the drums were standing in liquid. An illegal boiler blowoff discharge also was observed. Soil and runoff samples collected during this time showed the presence of chlorinated solvents and phthalates. In June 1991, the drums were manifested off site to a reclamation site. The boiler blowoff discharge was discontinued.

In 1991, Mecklenburg County issued the Ram Leather Care facility a Notice of Violation for improper disposal of a potentially hazardous waste. Also in 1991, the North Carolina Division of Solid Waste Management and the North Carolina Division of Environmental Management issued Notices of Violation to the facility. In 1992, a Compliance Order with an Administrative Penalty of \$126,998 was issued to the facility. Ram Leather Care declared bankruptcy in 1993. In 1995, the North Carolina Superfund Section conducted sampling for a combined Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection. The North Carolina Superfund Section discovered that a new well had been installed at the nearest residence and consumption of ground water had resumed. This new residential well contained PCE at 204 µg/l. The North Carolina Superfund Section requested a removal action, and EPA subsequently installed filtration systems on three contaminated private wells. State funds paid for change-out of the filters until 2000, when the funding expired.

In 1999, EPA initiated surface and subsurface soil and ground water sampling as part of the Expanded Site Inspection/Remedial Investigation (ESI/RI). A subsequent Groundwater Investigation Report was completed in August 2001. The results of the ESI/RI sampling event documented an estimated 11,875 square foot area of surface soil containing PCE, DDD, gamma-chlordane, and bis (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate. During the 1999 sampling event, a 10-foot deep borehole was discovered in the area of contaminated soil. Contaminants in soil at the bottom of this borehole included PCE, gamma-chlordane, and bis (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate. The level of PCE (78 milligrams per kilogram or mg/kg) in soil in the borehole was the highest of any soil sample collected on the site. Subsurface soil samples collected during the ESI/RI showed contaminated soil extending down to the top of the bedrock at 45 feet below land surface. A number of samples collected at varying depths served to document an estimated 19,686 cubic yards of contaminated soil containing PCE, trichloroethene, cis-1,2 dichloroethene, and vinyl chloride at the Ram Leather Care site.

Contaminants detected in soils at the Ram Leather Care facility include chlorinated solvents, petroleum-related compounds, pesticides, and bis (2-ethylhexyl) phthalate. Chlorinated solvents have been detected in drinking water wells at concentrations exceeding health-based benchmarks and in monitoring wells. Ground water is the only source of drinking water within at least 1 mile of the facility. It is estimated that 522 people within 1 mile of the facility and an additional 7,977 people within 4 miles of the facility rely on ground water for drinking. Although sampling has not shown a release to the surface water pathway, wetlands and fisheries are present downgradient of the site. The facility is currently used for a weekend flea market, but the owner has been instructed not to use water from the facility's well for any purposes.

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.