

## FAX TRANSMITTAL

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GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION

## E P A E L E C T R O N I C M A I L M E S S A G E

Date: 04-Feb-1996 12:26pm EST  
 From: GROUP TAT-LA  
 TAT-LA  
 Dept: (REG, 09, HWMD) (C)  
 Tel No: 310-435-6188

TO: See Below

Subject: Cajon (Santa Fe) Derailment, San Bernadino, CA POLREP 2

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
 POLLUTION REPORT

I. HEADING

Date: 02/03/96

Subject: Cajon (Santa Fe) Derailment, San Bernardino Co., CA

From: Richard Martyn, FOOSC Region IX

To: EPA Washington, DC - OERR/ERD

POLREP No: 2

II. BACKGROUND

Site No.:  
 Action Memo Status: N/A  
 Response Authority: CERCLA  
 Start Date: 02/01/96  
 State Notification:  
 Demobilization Date: Unknown  
 NPL Status: Non-NPL  
 Completion Date:  
 Delivery Order No.:

III. SITE INFORMATION

## A. Incident Category

Emergency Response (Train Derailment)

## B. Site Description

1. Site DescriptionAt 0410 hours on ~~January 3~~ <sup>Feb 1</sup>, 1996, a Burlington Northern

Santa Fe (BNSF) freight train containing 49 cars derailed at milepost 66.9 South Main Track near the intersection of highways I-15 and 138 in San Bernardino Co., California. Upon derailling, the train landed in a wash next to the rail line. The train was a runaway at the time of the derailment and resulted in an unknown number of injuries and two confirmed fatalities. The fatality victims were BNSF employees working on the train. The derailment resulted in the compression of the train from over 3000 feet to approximately 500 feet. The wreck resulted in a fire at the derailment site with chemicals released into the wash.

The derailment is in a relatively remote area. The nearest inhabitants are approximately 2 miles from the derailment and consists of several businesses including a hotel. After the derailment, nearby businesses including the hotel were evacuated. The evacuation has since been lifted. Based on changing weather patterns the town of Oak Hills, located 10 miles northeast of the accident, was voluntary evacuated to the San Bernardino Fair Grounds. 200-300 people were estimated to have been temporarily housed at this facility. The voluntary evacuation was cancelled at 1700 hrs. after receipt of air data collected and analyzed by South Coast AQMD. Interstate 15 and Highway 138 were closed to all but emergency vehicles and news media.

The command post is currently set up at the USFS Cajon Fire Station. A Unified Command is in place with the California Dept. of Forestry (CDF) serving as the Incident Commander for the fire suppression/emergency phase of the response. California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) will become the incident commander for the environmental cleanup.

## 2. Description of Threat

The train consisted of 49 cars including 4 locomotives. Forty five of the 49 cars were derailed. The derailment resulted in the release of six confirmed hazardous materials including diesel fuel; trimethyl phosphite; liquid petroleum distillate, n.o.s.; butyl acrylate; denatured alcohol and methylethyl ketone. A fire started upon derailment involving an unknown number of cars. The fire resulted in visible plume that migrated to the west. An unknown amount of the released hazardous materials migrated from the derailment site into the wash. The material in the wash ignited and resulted in several hundred yards of wash bed being scorched. There are small pockets of free product as well as contaminated soil located in the wash.

By late evening on February 2, 1996, fire personnel believed that the hazardous materials were consumed by the fire. The fire is currently being fueled by other cargo on the train (wood and tires). At approximately 2100 hours, a rail car containing tires ignited and is continuing to burn.

### C. Preliminary Assessment Results

Preliminary investigation activities documented extensive soil contamination in the wash. Preliminary monitoring conducted by the Region IX START contractor and CDF safety officers indicated 4% LEL maximum and 4-32 ppm total volatile organic compounds at the derailment location. Air samples were collected and analyzed by the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

Air monitoring conducted throughout the day confirmed the need for Level B protection for workers at the derailment location.

### IV. RESPONSE INFORMATION

#### A. Planned Removal Actions

Fire suppression is the primary concern at this point. The fire at the derailment site is the primary hazard. The derailment is currently being dismantled as part of the fire suppression.

Due to an imminent threat of rain, BNSF is beginning to initiate a storm water management program in the wash. USEPA, USFS, DFG, and CALEPA provided BNSF with the requirements for the remediation and restoration of the wash. BNSF will begin the soil remediation today in order to prevent contaminant migration due to runoff.

The NTSB accident investigation, NRDA and criminal investigations are continuing.

#### B. Situation

##### 1. Current Situation

Based on air sampling data collected by the South Coast Air Quality Management District, the Unified Command reopened Interstate 15 at 1422 hours on February 2, 1996. Hwy 138 was reopened on February 2, 1996.

Fire suppression activities are continuing. BNSF is dismantling the wreck as part of the fire suppression operation. BNSF have installed a culvert to facilitate drainage under the damaged trestle on the rail line.

BNSF installed a series of containment pond upstream to slow runoff through the derailment site. They will also install an inverted culvert diking system to prevent downstream migration of contaminants downstream in the wash. BNSF is

also beginning the soil removal operations in the wash. Soil removal operations continued through out the night on February 3, 1995. They will remove the first few inches of soil and then evaluate the need for further soil removal.

Due to safety problems on-site, USEPA, CALOSHA, DFG, CDF and CALEPA met with representatives from BNSF to develop a comprehensive health and safety plan for the emergency response phase. The plan was developed on February 2 and approved on February 3.

A sample plan was developed by Environmental Solutions the BNSF contractor to address soil contamination from derailment releases. The plan was approved by the Unified Command environmental and remedial branches. The plan emphasized evaluation sampling down gradient drinking water wells. Water sampling will be monitored by the California Regional Water Quality Control Board.

At the request of the FOSC, the NOAA Scientific Support Committee has been activated and a Scientific Support Coordinator arrived on-site at 1530 hours. NOAA is providing weather and toxicological information.

BNSF has replaced the damaged rail line. Contaminated soil on the rail line was removed. Trains will begin test runs on the new rail system on February 4, 1995.

## 2. Enforcement

FOSC R. Martyn has issued a Notice of Federal Interest to representatives from BNSF.

### C. Next Steps

1. Complete fire suppression.
2. Dismantle derailment.
3. Evaluate environmental damage joint effort by state/local/federal agencies.
4. Complete soil remediation.
5. Assess future monitoring/sampling issues in connection with the incident.

### D. Key Issues

1. Evaluate and remediate environmental damage at rail line prior to rebuilding of track.
2. Storm water management in the wash.
3. Site Health and Safety
4. Down gradient groundwater sampling.
5. Running trains through derailment area.

### V. Cost Information

The response is being funded by BNSF. All other agency costs will be accrued at a later date.

VI. Disposition of Wastes

Contaminated soil excavated from the wash will be stockpiled adjacent to Hwy 138. The soil will be underlined and covered with plastic prior to disposal. The debris (rail equipment) will be salvaged as scrap metal.

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