

## NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

\*\*\*NPL Site\*\*\*

July 2017

### THE BATTERY RECYCLING COMPANY | Bo. Cambalache, Arecibo, Puerto Rico

#### **Site Location:**

The Battery Recycling Company (a.k.a. Puerto Rico Battery Recycling) site is located on State Road 2, Km 72.2, in Cambalache Ward, Arecibo, Puerto Rico. This industrial facility is located in a rural area southeast of the Arecibo town center. It occupies approximately 16 acres and is bounded by State Road No. 2, across of which is a hardware store, former cattle pasture land to the north, farm land to the south and a swampy, wooded lot to the east.

#### **Site History:**

The Battery Recycling Company, Inc. has owned and operated the battery processing facility since July 1994 and has conducted secondary lead smelting and reclamation operations since 2004. Operations at the facility temporarily shut down in the spring of 2014. Operations at the facility included breaking and sorting lead-acid batteries and refining the lead to be resold to battery manufacturers. During a facility inspection in 2010, the EPA observed improper storage of hazardous materials and hazardous waste, significant spillage of particulate matter and overflow of the stormwater/wastewater collection system to several areas, including the on-site drainage ditch on the east side of the property. The EPA found the facility to be in violation of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) on several counts, including illegal storage and disposal of hazardous waste and failure to minimize releases.

#### **Site Contamination/Contaminants:**

Several areas of the property are contaminated with lead, including bare soil areas, vegetated areas, asphalt and gravel-covered areas and an on-site drainage ditch. Slag waste piles stored in open-air buildings contain elevated levels of lead, arsenic, cadmium and other heavy metals. Soils throughout the site and on surrounding properties contain lead above the EPA's Removal Management Level (RML).

#### **Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:**

Storm water runoff containing lead and other hazardous substances migrates to the adjacent land and there have been fugitive air emissions of lead from the facility. There is a contaminated wetland on the eastern portion of the property, and there are several other wetland areas downstream of the site. Contaminated storm water flows through irrigation channels to the Caño Tiburones Nature Reserve, a Commonwealth designated natural area that is Puerto Rico's largest wetland and contains habitat for endangered and threatened species. People have been seen fishing for crabs downstream. The surrounding residential and worker populations, as well as agricultural and environmental resources, are affected by fugitive air emissions.

#### **Response Activities (to date):**

In 2010 and 2011, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found elevated lead levels in the children of the Battery Recycling Company, Inc. employees. Subsequent EPA sampling of the employees' vehicles and homes indicated elevated lead levels as the pathway of lead-contaminated dust from employee boots and uniforms from the facility to their vehicles and homes. In 2011 and 2012 the EPA evaluated 202 residential properties and 282 vehicles of current and former facility employees, and conducted removal actions at 149 residential properties and 145 vehicles that contained lead contamination. In July 2015, the EPA excavated the contaminated soils in the former cattle pasture land just north of the facility. The EPA is currently stabilizing the site to minimize the risk of further releases.

#### **Need for NPL Listing:**

The Commonwealth of Puerto Rico referred this site to the EPA. Other federal and state cleanup programs were evaluated, but are not viable at this time. The EPA received a letter in support of proposing to add this site to the NPL from the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

*[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See 56 FR 5600, February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]*

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](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq/index.asp) can be found on the Internet at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq/index.asp> or by telephone at 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-232-4636.