

Environmental Restoration Project



ER Site No. 30: PCB Spill (Reclamation Yard)

ADS: 1302

Operable Unit: Technical Area I

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Site History

ER Site 30 is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of M and 14th streets, in the southeast portion of Technical Area (TA) I. The site, most commonly called the Old Reclamation Yard, has also been known as the TA-I Reclamation Yard, Sandia Salvage Yard, Old Salvage Yard, Old Reapplication Yard, Auction Yard, and Reclamation Receiving Dismantling Yard. Other reapplication yards exist in TA-I that are not part of ER Site 30.

The entire 6.59-acre site is fenced. The site is unpaved and flat with minor engineering controls for surface water runoff on the western portion of the site. Until its removal in 2000, Building 897X was located within the site boundary and was used for storage by several different groups. Building 897X was constructed in 1952 as a reclamation storage building and has been used continuously since that time. The building was originally used for melting scrap aluminum into ingots as part of a disposal process. From the early 1960s until 1992, the building stored excess SNL/NM equipment that was to be sold at auctions. Employees interviewed said that small amounts (less than 5 gal at a time) of virgin acids and organic compounds were stored in the building for up to 60 days.

Until their removal, other on-site structures included Building 889 (the Storage Shed Building) on the site's western boundary and a caretaker's office in the north-central part of the site. Temporary buildings (MO-220, MO-221, and MO-222) along the northern boundary were not originally considered part of the site.

Details of the site's early history are limited. By the early 1950s, surplus supplies and scrap materials were sold there every week. Items to be sold were separated by type and organized in different areas within the yard. The arrangement of materials in the yard is unknown. Supplies and material stored and sold at this site include cabinets, desks, scrap metal, pallets, wood, machines, general equipment, capacitors, transistors, transformers of various sizes,

miscellaneous electronic components, hardware (e.g., bolts), tools, epoxies, polyester resins, and hobby-type material. In September 1990, the site was cleared of salvage.

While excavating a pit to install utilities in the western portion of the site in August 1991, workers uncovered a viscous, black, oozing substance in a layer 1 to 3 ft below grade. A sample of this material was collected and sent to an analytical laboratory. The material was determined to be non-hazardous waste and was disposed of accordingly. It is not known what became of the soil that was removed from this excavation.

In the fall of 1991, an assessment and remediation were expedited in the western portion of the site to prepare for construction of an office complex. At about the same time, the site was expanded to include the western one-third of the current site. A Sampling and Analysis Plan was prepared and implemented in the spring of 1992. In the spring of 1993, it was determined that the existing data were insufficient to characterize the site and that a more rigorous, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)-approved strategy would be required for the next sampling event.

In May 1993, during installation of a gas line immediately south of the southwestern corner of the site boundary, construction workers discovered a heavy oil- or tar-based substance in soil approximately 3 ft below grade. This material appeared to be the same substance that was uncovered in August 1991. Again, this material was determined to be non-hazardous waste and was left in place. However, because the oil- or tar-like substance was observed outside the existing ER Site 30 boundary, the boundary was redefined on June 2, 1993, to include an additional area 60 ft by 120 ft on the southwest corner of the site.

The TA-I RFI Work Plan was delivered to the EPA for review in February 1995. Field activities outlined in the work plan began in March 1995. The surface and near-surface field investigation as outlined in the work plan was completed in April 1995. Site characterization included collection of surface (0-1 ft) and near-surface (4-5 ft) soil samples.

The following conclusions were determined based on the results of the RFI:

- Polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB) concentrations indicative of contamination and potentially hazardous to human health were detected during field screening and confirmatory laboratory analysis. The results indicated the presence of PCB-contaminated soils in both the surface and the near-surface samples (<5 ft). The highest levels of PCBs were detected in the surface samples (0-1 ft) in the northwestern portion of the site. However, low levels of PCBs were detected across the entire site. The PCB levels range from <1 to 87 ppm.
- No volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were detected by the on-site laboratory, and no significant concentrations of VOCs were detected by the off-site laboratory. The few VOCs that were detected are attributable to laboratory contamination.
- The semivolatile organic compounds detected in low-level concentrations are indicative of widespread, low-level contamination associated with the industrial setting of TA-I and do not pose a significant risk to human health.

- Metals were detected in low-level concentrations that do not pose a significant risk to human health.
- Other than the tar-like substance identified in the southwestern corner of the site, visibly contaminated soils were not observed during soil sampling, and organic vapors were not detected by field screening with a photoionization detector.

Interviews conducted as part of the site investigation confirmed the storing of capacitors in the yard and the potential for PCB contamination at unspecified locations in the yard. Additional site history information and compilation of data that have been collected at this site are provided in the TA-I Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Investigation (RFI) Work Plan that was submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in February 1995.

A voluntary corrective measure (VCM) plan to remediate the site for PCBs was completed and submitted to New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) in April 1998. NMED returned a request for supplemental information (RSI) in September 1998. The RSI was responded to in November 1998.

In January 2000, supplemental sampling was completed to characterize the portion of the site where the temporary buildings (MO-220, MO-221, and MO-222) had been located along the northern boundary of the site. Twenty composite soil samples were collected for PCBs and 12 discrete soil samples were collected for TAL metals. PCBs were detected in the samples but all concentrations were well below the PCB Megarule cleanup level of 1 mg/kg. Several of the samples also had metal concentrations above background. The following metals exceeded NMED-approved maximum background concentrations, with the number of samples exceeding background provided parenthetically: arsenic (1), barium (10) cadmium (5), copper (4), lead (4), silver (1) and zinc (3). The maximum concentrations of PCBs and metals were clustered in the south-central portion of the originally-excluded area.

As a result of this study and other information the boundary for Site 30 was modified to include the area originally occupied by the MOs (MO-220, MO-221, and MO-222 as well as most of the ditch to the west of the original Site 30 boundary.

Constituents of Concern

The potential constituents of concern (COCs) that have been identified for this site during evaluation of its history include:

PCBs,
Petroleum hydrocarbons, and
Metals.

As indicated below in "Current Status of Work," the only COC thought to be of concern after site investigation is PCBs.

Current Hazards

There are no current hazards at this site.

Current Status of Work

Changes in regulations and planned near-term usage of the site caused a revision to the cleanup strategy propose in the original VCM plan submitted to NMED. Thus, in April 1999, a notice was sent to the Environmental Protection Agency notifying them of the intent to conduct a self-implementing cleanup under 40 CFR 761.61(a). (40 CFR 761 is also known as the "PCB Megarule.") The EPA returned deficiency comments on cleanup proposal in May 1999. In March 2000, SNL submitted a revised notification of the self-implementing cleanup. In April, the EPA indicated that SNL had adequately addressed EPA concerns about the original notification of the self-implementing cleanup.

The self-implementing cleanup started May 1. All the soil within the "hot spot" areas (PCB levels greater than 1 PPM) within and adjacent to the soil boundary were excavated and sent to landfills. Most of the site was determined to be clean, based on field-screening using an immunoassay analysis, after excavating the top 1 foot of soil. However, a portion of the northwestern portion of the site, which originally had the highest PCB concentrations, required excavation of the top 3 feet of soil before it was determined to be conditionally clean based on the field-screening. A total of 341 composite soil samples were collected and sent to an off-site laboratory as verification samples. The initial excavation was completed on June 6, 2000 based on immunoassay field screening results. Four of the 341 soil samples sent to an off-site laboratory returned concentrations of greater than 1 PPM. Thus, limited additional excavation was completed to clean the quadrants in which these samples occurred. The laboratory results of these sampled areas returned concentrations of less than 1 PPM in September 2000.

A No Further Action (NFA) Proposal was submitted to the NMED/HWB in October 2001. The NMED accepted the NFA Proposal for Site 30 in January 2003.

Future Work Planned

No further work is planned.

Waste Volume Estimated/Generated

As a result of the self-implementing surface cleanup, waste was generated and disposed in landfills:

- An estimated 5066 cubic yards of 1 to 50 ppm PCB-contaminated soils was excavated and disposed of at a permitted landfill.
- Additionally, an estimated 35 cubic yards of PCB-TSCA-contaminated soils with PCB concentration greater than 50 ppm was excavated and disposed at a permitted disposal facility in Utah.

Information for ER Site 30 was last updated Jan 28, 2003.