Diaz Chemical Corporation

New York

EPA ID#: NYD067532580

EPA REGION 2

Congressional District(s): 27

Orleans

Village of Holley

NPL LISTING HISTORY
Proposed Date: 3/8/2004
Final Date: 7/22/2004

Site Description

The 5-acre Diaz Chemical Corporation site is bounded on the north by Jackson Street, where both residential parcels and a parcel of land owned by Diaz Chemical, which includes a parking lot and a warehouse, are located. To the east, it is bounded by residential parcels on South Main Street. To the south and west, it is bordered by Conrail railroad tracks, and beyond that by undeveloped land and a group of buildings that are now vacant. The site is located about 25 miles west of Rochester and 50 miles east of Buffalo. The nearest municipal drinking water supply well is located 0.66 mile south of the site.

The property was initially developed as an industrial plant in the 1890s and was used primarily for tomato processing and cider vinegar production before being purchased by Diaz Chemical in 1974. Diaz Chemical was a manufacturer of specialty organic intermediates for the agricultural, pharmaceutical, photographic, color and dye, and personal care products industries. The Diaz Chemical product line varied over the years of operation but primarily consisted of halogenated aromatic compounds and substituted benzotrifluorides. The Diaz Chemical facility has a long history of spills, releases and discharges of various materials to the environment that dates back to about 1975.

An accidental air release occurred on January 5, 2002, when a reactor vessel in a process building overheated, causing its safety valve to rupture and release approximately 75 gallons of a chemical mixture through a roof stack vent. The release consisted primarily of a mixture of steam, toluene, and 2-chloro-6-fluorophenol as well as related phenolic compounds. The splash zone for the release extended northeast from the facility into the neighboring residential community. Soon after the release, people complained of acute health effects such as sore throats, headaches, eye irritation, nosebleeds, and skin rashes. As a result of the release, residents voluntarily relocated from some of the homes in the neighborhood to area hotels with assistance from Diaz Chemical.

Site Responsibility: This site is being addressed through federal actions.

Threat and Contaminants

While a number of organic contaminants have been found in the soil, groundwater, and on surfaces in surrounding homes, with the exception of ethylene dibromide present in the groundwater above drinking water standards, none have been found at levels that would pose a public health risk.

Cleanup Approach

The site is being addressed in two stages: immediate actions and a long-term remedial phase focusing on the cleanup of the entire site.

Response Action Status

Immediate Actions: In March 2002, the State of New York obtained a court order that required Diaz Chemical to continue to fund the relocations until an appropriate environmental and health assessment was performed for the affected neighborhood. In May 2002, when Diaz Chemical sought to discontinue the relocations for ability-to-pay reasons, the New York State Law Department requested that EPA take a removal action to assume the lead for the temporary relocations. On May 16, 2002, EPA, under its removal authority, assumed responsibility for the relocation expenses of the residents who remained relocated at that time. EPA then initiated a preliminary assessment of the affected neighborhood and performed sampling of air, soil, interior surfaces and household items. EPA also secured the site and removed contaminated materials, drums, piping, reactor vessels, and storage tanks.

In June 2003, Diaz Chemical filed for bankruptcy and abandoned the facility, leaving behind large volumes of chemicals in drums and tanks. EPA began providing 24-hour security at the facility to prevent public access. EPA is presently operating a groundwater extraction and treatment system to contain the subsurface plume of chemical contamination.

Entire Site: From 1994 to 1999, Diaz Chemical conducted an investigation under the direction of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC). The results revealed soils and ground water on the property and nearby, contaminated with volatile organic compounds and semivolatile organic compounds. NYSDEC issued a Record of Decision (ROD) in March 2002 calling for, among other things, groundwater extraction via an interceptor trench and treatment. Diaz Chemical installed a groundwater extraction and treatment system.

In March 2005, EPA signed a ROD for the property acquisition and permanent relocation of eight owner-occupants and two individual tenants who remained in temporary quarters at that time. EPA purchased all eight homes and provided the owners with relocation assistance. Further, the two individual tenants were assisted with relocating into new rental dwellings. EPA is providing for the security and maintenance of the acquired properties.

In March 2005, EPA initiated a remedial investigation and feasibility study (RI/FS) to determine the nature and extent of contamination at the site and to identify and evaluate remedial alternatives. This work included installing 15 groundwater monitoring wells and sampling them along with 23 existing wells in order to better delineate the contaminated groundwater plume and performing indoor air sampling at nearby homes that were deemed to be potentially impacted by the groundwater plume.

Based on the indoor air sampling results, vapor mitigation systems were installed at two homes in June 2007. Due to water infiltration issues into one of the basements, the mitigation system was removed and replaced with a carbon filtration system in May 2009. Also at that time, a carbon filtration system was installed in another home.

In September 2009, the next phase of the RI/FS field sampling program commenced. This work includes installing 11 groundwater monitoring wells and sampling them along with the existing monitoring wells, soil sampling at 28 locations on the Diaz Chemical facility property and at 23 locations in the residential neighborhood, surface water and sediment sampling at nearby Sandy Creek and at catch basins and drains located at the facility, wipe sampling, and an ecological field characterization.

It is anticipated that the RI/FS will be completed in spring 2012.

Site Facts: EPA has initiated a search for Potentially Responsible Parties.

Cleanup Progress

To date, EPA has shipped over 8,000 drums and over 112,000 gallons of hazardous wastes off-site for reuse and/or disposal. Also, 105 reactor vessels and 34 storage tanks have been emptied and decontaminated. All vessels and tanks have been sent off-site for recycling and/or disposal. Over 51,000 linear feet of facility piping (accounting for 95% of the existing piping) has been dismantled and removed. Approximately 800 gallons of waste within the piping has been recovered and disposed of. Over 750 tons of scrap metal and 500 tons of concrete have been recycled. Over 1,200 cubic yards of debris and 3,100 tons of contaminated concrete have been disposed of.

Warehouse 2 has been decontaminated and was sprayed with an encapsulating agent to reduce the potential for vapors to be released. A water cooling distribution system, Building A, Building C, Building D, laboratory, electrical room, Warehouse 4, and Building R have been dismantled.

Two water treatment systems are being operated and maintained. One system is for facility runoff water that enters the Village of Holley wastewater treatment facility and the other system is for extracting and treating the on-site contaminated groundwater plume. The on-site groundwater treatment system has been rehabilitated and upgraded to enhance its operation.

Securing the site, dismantling buildings, removing contaminated materials, drums, piping, reactor vessels and tanks has mitigated the immediate threat posed by the site.

Site Repositories

Community Free Llibrary, 86 Public Square, Holley, NY 14470

EPA Region 2 Superfund Records Center, 290 Broadway, 18th Floor, New York, NY 10007-1866