



At a Glance

Catalyst for Improving the Environment

Why We Did This Review

The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is testing long-term monitoring results at Superfund sites the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has deleted from the National Priorities List (NPL). PAB Oil and Chemical Services, Inc., Superfund Site, in Abbeville, Louisiana, is one of eight sites being reviewed. In March 2008, the OIG obtained ground water samples from the site and conducted an inspection.

Background

EPA placed PAB on the Superfund NPL in 1989. Recovery and disposal of oil and gas wastes had contaminated the site with arsenic, barium, and organic compounds. Remedial action included treating, consolidating, and capping the onsite soils and wastes. Region 6 deleted PAB from the NPL in 2000 after it met clean-up goals.

For further information, contact our Office of Congressional, Public Affairs and Management at (202) 566-2391.

To view the full report, click on the following link:
www.epa.gov/oig/reports/2010/20100921-10-P-0229.pdf

EPA Should Improve Oversight of Long-Term Monitoring at PAB Oil and Chemical Services, Inc., Superfund Site in Louisiana

What We Found

Our independent ground water sampling results from the PAB Oil and Chemical Services, Inc., Superfund Site were consistent with Region 6's valid historical results. However, we found that Region 6 accepted from the responsible parties' contractor two types of invalid ground water data at PAB and included that invalid data in its analyses. For two wells, data were collected on stagnant water at the bottom of the wells, below screen openings where the water enters the wells. Consequently, data on both water quality and water levels were collected contrary to accepted procedures and were invalid. Ground water level measurements are needed to understand the direction ground water flows. Measures of water quality are needed to ensure that the contamination treatment actions are successful and ground water quality does not degrade.

Region 6 said it was aware of the declined water level condition, but noted it had data from other wells that were sufficient to determine the direction of ground water flow and that the remedy was protective of human health and the environment. We agree that the invalid data did not have adverse implications for the Region's protection decision because ground water flows past these two wells *before* flowing under the area where contaminated soils and wastes were capped. However, if ground water conditions were to change, the invalid data could impede the Region's ability to determine whether the site's clean-up remedy is still protective and whether the network of ground water monitoring wells remains effective.

What We Recommend

We recommended that Region 6 improve oversight at PAB by amending the site's most recent Five-Year Review to identify invalid data, and by modifying the long-term monitoring plan to ensure collection and reporting of valid data on site conditions. The Region's official response only partly addressed one recommendation and did not address the other. In a follow-up meeting, Region 6 staff committed to completing actions that would meet the intent of both recommendations. We consider both recommendations to be "undecided with resolution efforts in progress." In its final response to this report, Region 6 should provide a corrective actions plan for both recommendations, including estimated or actual milestone completion dates.