From: Eoc, Epahq
Sent: Sun 1/26/2014 10:44:56 PM
Subject: EOC Spot Report: Chemical Spill, Charleston WV – Update #18

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EOC Spot Report: Chemical Spill, Charleston WV – Update #18

US Environmental Protection Agency
Report as of 17:00 January 26, 2014

Overview:

On January 10, the President approved an Emergency Declaration for the State of West Virginia after a chemical, 4-methylcyclohexanemethanol, (MCHM) leaked at a Freedom Industries chemical plant and into the Elk River in Charleston, WV. The spill occurred near the Kanawha Valley Water Treatment Plant which detected the chemical even after an increased carbon treatment effort was put in place. Freedom Industries is working to clean up the spill at the facility and in the river.

State, Local and other Federal Agency Actions:

West Virginia water authorities issued a "Do Not Use Water Notice" for 10 counties and the President's Emergency Declaration covers eight counties. West Virginia American Water Company (WVAWC) customers were told not to use tap water for drinking, cooking, washing, or bathing. Water could be used for toilets and fire emergencies. When the incident originally occurred, it contaminated drinking water for 300,000 people.

WVDEP approved a load of a mixture of glycerin and river water for shipment off site. The plan of action is that all storage tanks inside the containment will be emptied, cleaned, and removed from the site.

However, the KY Department of Environmental Protection, Waste Management Division (KYDEP) stated that Big Run Landfill has now decided to decline accepting the waste from Freedom Industries. The Big Run Landfill is concerned that the waste could enter their leachate, which is processed by a local wastewater treatment plant. EPA notified WV DEP about the Big Run Landfill decision and WVDEP is planning to contact Big Run Landfill to further discuss the properties of MCHM. Freedom Industries is also exploring other options for disposal.

The EPA Region 3 Water Division reported that the West Virginia Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management has posted operational sampling results as of January 25. Sample data for PPH testing as of Jan 23 and Jan 24 is also posted. The web site is http://www.dhsem.wv.gov/Pages/WV-American-Water-Emergency.aspx

This weekend, facility continued to pump water from outside of the secondary containment area. The majority of the site is frozen and most of the holes/sumps dug inside the tank containment are frozen and cannot be pumped. The facility dug a hole behind Tank 394 about three feet down and found only loose fill, not the expected gravel/compacted soil. The hole was to prepare for a planned vertical French drain that could vacuum product from under the tanks. The subsurface loose fill and brick debris make the planned French drain ineffective for recovering product.

Ice in the river continues to be a significant issue with maintaining the river boom in place. The facility

contractor is attempting to break ice and to properly position the river booms. Because of the ice, once the boom is repositioned further from the river bank, it will be allowed to freeze in place.

Saturday night the facility broke the surface ice on the containment trench at the base of the hill and pumped out the water to maintain a safe freeboard, which should prevent potential overflow. The facility reported that water seeped in underneath the liner. WV DEP, EPA, the facility, and their contractor discussed removal of the water and repair of the poly liner. The facility will add salt to melt the ice in the trench and pump out the water. After the water is pumped out, the polyethylene liner will be cut and rolled back to pump out the accumulated water and possible product. The polyethylene liner will then be placed back in the trench and positioned into the hillside so it collects surface runoff, subsurface water and possible product.

The facility and its remediation consultant, CEC, are scheduled to meet with WVDEP and EPA on Monday, January 27, 2014, to discuss the remediation plan.

The WV Emergency Operations Center transitioned to a Partial Activation on 1/19. The FEMA National Watch Center is at Normal Operations (Watch/Steady State). The FEMA Region III Regional Response Coordination Center remains at Level III (Partial Activation). An Interim Operating Facility is operational in Charleston, with a Federal Coordinating Officer, a Type-III Incident Management Assistance Team, and a FEMA Liaison in place.

This weekend, chemists and lab managers have formed a group to share information about the analysis of MCHM and PPH. The group participants include the National Guard, WV American Water, American Water Research, REI Consulting, DuPont, Dow, Matric, NIH, EPA R3 Lab and the EPA ERT lab. The group is communicating by e-mails and conference calls.

http://emergency.cdc.gov/chemical/MCHM/westvirginia2014/index.asp

EPA Action:

EPA Region 3 continues to monitor and provide oversight of facility activities at the Freedom Industries tank farm site and the Poca staging facility. EPA continues to coordinate with WVDEP and WVAWC.

Media Interest: High

http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/25/freedom-industries-storage-tanks_n_4666402.html

The HQ EOC will continue to monitor and provide updates as needed.
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