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EOC Spot Report: Chemical Spill, Charleston WV – Update #13

US Environmental Protection Agency

Report as of 1600 January 16, 2014

Overview: On January 10, the President approved an Emergency Declaration for the State of West Virginia after a chemical 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 have 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 are told not to use tap water for drinking, cooking, washing, or bathing. Water can be used for toilets and fire emergencies. This has impacted 300,000 people.

Region 3's Water Division reported that late yesterday (1/15/14), ATSDR/CDC provided additional advice to the Bureau for Public Health regarding the target screening level used for clearing the West Virginia American Water Company (WVAWC) distribution system. While the 1 ppm level of methylcyclohexanemethanol (BCHM) is still believed to be protective, ATSDR/CDC recommended that pregnant women be advised that they may wish to seek an alternate source of water. This precaution is featured prominently on the WVAWC website, adjacent to the 'water safety map,' and appears early in press advisories issued to announce the lifting of "Do Not Use" restrictions in successive zones within the distribution system.

WVAWC now estimates that 71,000 customers (of estimated 100,000) now can use water without restrictions. The instructions on how to flush household and building plumbing are explicit in material on WVAWC's website. However, unanticipated issues have arisen and new FAQs have been added to address common questions or previously unexplained matters. New FAQs addressing issues such as lingering odors, cloudy or discolored water, can be found at http://www.amwater.com/files/Elk%20River%20WQ%20FAQ.pdf.

The Poison Control Center has been designated as a source of information for consumers concerned about health issues. At this point, we understand that there is no clear association of health complaints with exposure. FEMA has issued ATSDR a limited mission assignment to initiate an epidemiological study.

EPA Region 3 OSCs reported that WVAMC's repair of a waterline adjacent to the facility caused large amount of water to move across the road and into the facility. This water migrated and filled the sumps in the floor of the concrete pad. The facility's contractor spent most of the yesterday afternoon pumping water from the sumps and the interior of the containment area.

The facility's contractor deployed horizontal absorbent booms inside the hard skimmer boom that extends from the property line down to the dock area. A total of seven interior horizontal

booms were deployed. The current boom strategy encompasses the entire sloped area of the Site, which is an area of possible migration of the MCHM into the river.

Exploratory geoprobe operations began in the containment area, in the vicinity of the breached MCHM tank. Holes were punched through the concrete to determine a location for a recovery well. Petroleum products were detected in these test holes, which were 10 feet below ground surface. Freedom Industries' lawyers have been in contact with Pennzoil, the previous owner of the site, concerning the issue. WVDEP is also aware of this legacy connection to previous facility operations.

WVDEP conducted exploratory digging along the hillside in the northeastern portion of the facility, just outside the containment area where the glycerin tanks are located. The odor of the product was prevalent. The facility's contractor placed absorbent boom along the wall and covered the area with a tarp, to prevent rain water from washing the product down the slope and into the river. The facility will excavate a trench from the containment wall in a down-gradient direction towards the existing interceptor trench to collect product and water.

An oil/water separator is being used in an attempt to remove the MCHM from the water that is being vacuumed from the interceptor trench and dike area. In the initial phases, it appears successful in separating the product from the water. The facility has collected samples from the influent and effluent of the separator to judge its performance. The facility is also requesting a permit from WVDEP's air division to use an air stripper that extracts volatiles, followed by two carbon vessels, to capture the product.

EPA Actions: A Region 3 OSC attended a meeting at the US Attorney's Office (Booth Goodwin II). The invited agencies discussed roles and responsibilities during this emergency. The main focus of the meeting was to ensure investigative agencies were coordinating with each other. WVDEP and EPA outlined the efforts to control the MCHM at the facility.

Media Interest: High

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

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