



EPA Doing Cleanup At ESI Environmental Inc.

ESI Environmental Inc. Site
Indianapolis, Indiana

October 2010

For more information

If you need more information about the removal project at the ESI Environmental Inc. site or if you have questions or comments you can contact these EPA team members:

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77 W. Jackson Blvd.
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On the Web

<http://www.epa.gov/region5/sites/esi/index.html>

<http://www.epaosc.org/esi>

On Oct. 8, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began a cleanup at the ESI Environmental Inc. property located on West 86th Street in Indianapolis. Indiana Department of Environmental Management requested EPA's assistance with the site in August after being contacted by the owners of the facility and informed of its pending closure. On Oct. 1, ESI Environmental Inc. filed bankruptcy leaving behind tanks containing hazardous chemicals such as sulfuric acid and polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs. This work is being done to address the potential imminent health threats posed by these abandoned chemicals. There have been two previous releases of chemicals from the site in 2007 and 2009 due to runoff from heavy rains. With the abandonment of the site, EPA wants to ensure that no future incidents will occur.

A review of historic information and a Sept. 1 site inspection by EPA found the following:

- A 1 million gallon oil storage tank contains about 300,000 gallons of possible PCB-containing sludge.
- Two 1 million gallon water storage tanks contain about 1.5 million gallons of sludge.
- Stormwater currently empties into one of the two 1 million gallon water storage tanks and then discharges into the sanitary sewer.
- Other storage tanks ranging in size from 3,000 to 90,000 gallons contain waste oil, water, sulfuric acid, caustics, hydrogen peroxide and sludge.

One of the primary concerns is the potential for chemicals from the site to be released into the city sanitary sewer system or area surrounding the site in the event of a heavy rain or snow melt. For this reason, a primary focus of the work will involve managing stormwater runoff.

The following activities have been conducted:

- All tanks on site have been sampled for PCBs to determine if those containers could be used for on-site storage of material to be pumped out of the stormwater system.
- Thousands of gallons of chemicals have been transported off-site and have been either been reused or disposed of properly.
- The storm sewers have begun to be cleaned out.
- The on-site buildings have been investigated and were found to have 2,200 samples archived. These samples were removed and will be disposed of properly.
- A draft stormwater management plan was developed.

The results of the sampling so far has shown low levels of metals, but no PCB contamination outside of the 1 million gallon tank (tank 51) or possibly two other smaller (15,000 - 22,500 gallon) tanks. Investigation into the suspected PCB contamination in tank 51 is being handled by an outside party.

The next steps

In the next few weeks, EPA will continue to clean out the storm sewers. Upon approval of the draft stormwater management plan, EPA will take measures to manage stormwater runoff.

Odor complaints

Several complaints have been received about odors. While the source of the odors is not known, EPA will follow up on these complaints. Anyone that has a complaint about odors believed to be coming from the site are urged to call the:

Mayor's Action Center
317-327-4MAC (4622)

Site background

ESI began operation in December 1999 as a commercial used oil processing facility. The facility collected, processed, recovered, and disposed of nonhazardous wastewater from industrial and commercial manufacturing plants. All materials received into the facility were treated and processed to separate the contaminants. The water collected during this process was discharged separately into the city of Indianapolis sanitary sewer system. The contaminants were further processed into a form that allowed for proper recycling or disposal. Any oils recovered in the process were shipped off-site to be reused. The site was designed so that the stormwater at the site was captured in its internal sewer system and ultimately run through its wastewater processing equipment prior to being discharged into the city sanitary sewer system.

On March 15, 2007, during a heavy rainfall, untreated oil and water from the site flowed into the city sewer system through a by-pass sewer that had been left open. This release resulted in contamination of surrounding commercial and residential properties. The resulting cleanup led to the by-pass sewer being permanently sealed. In 2007, ESI was notified by a customer that a shipment of used oil from the site had contained PCBs. As a result, the equipment was decontaminated. Another release occurred in 2009 resulting again in contamination of area commercial and residential properties. Another cleanup took place, but these two releases indicate the need for runoff from the site to be controlled.

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**ESI ENVIRONMENTAL INC. SITE:
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