



Cook Slurry Explosives Site Investigation & Cleanup

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 8 • MAY 2009

Introduction

The Cook Slurry Explosives Site is located west of Utah Lake, thirty miles southwest of Salt Lake City in Utah County. The site is largely an undeveloped, open field that was once a relatively remote area of Utah. Today, however, Saratoga Springs, a newly developed city of 10,000 and part of the Wasatch Front Metropolitan Area, comes within a half mile of the site.

Since 1978, the primary activity at the site was explosives production and distribution. Cook Associates, Inc. leased the property to produce a slurry product of ammonium nitrate and fuel oil. Known as ANFO slurry, these explosives are used largely in mining operations.

Cook Associates, Inc. leased the site from the State of Utah School and Institutional Trust Lands Administration (SITLA) until 2008. In 2008, SITLA conducted an assessment of the property and subsequently contacted the Utah County Sheriff Department's Bomb Squad to remove potentially portable explosives from the site. These included blasting caps, detonation cord and some high-explosive boosters which were in unlabeled, open, plastic grocery bags.

On April 8, 2009, SITLA contacted the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and requested that EPA lead an investigation to determine the nature and extent of explosive materials remaining at the site. EPA visited the property on April 14, 2009. EPA observed potentially explosive material that appeared to have been left unattended for some time. There was evidence of leaking tanks and poorly-stored

hazardous materials, such as mislabeled and leaking containers.

Site Description and Risk

The Cook Slurry Explosives Site is a 480-acre parcel of land, within which is a fenced 3,800 square foot building. The building and fenced property contain various tanks and containers filled with explosives slurry and process ingredients. EPA considers the building and the 2.6-acre fenced area around it to be the area of focus at the site. The remainder of the site is made up of undeveloped, native, vegetated fields with various unpaved access roads.

The site is bordered by an undeveloped field to the south and a field and a mountain range to the west. To the east and north, there are growing, residential neighborhoods, the closest of which are just over a quarter mile away. EPA believes there could be a risk to nearby residents if materials on the site are not addressed. However, the risk to residents is remote at this time; the material found on site is relatively stable in its current state. Further, the material on site does not spontaneously combust, but rather, it must be ignited either intentionally or by some other means.

EPA is acting to protect nearby residents in the short-term by ensuring that the site remains secure and locked, posting warning signs around the site, evaluating the site, and designing an appropriate cleanup plan. EPA has not removed any material off the property.

Next Steps

EPA will lead a team that will further evaluate the Cook Slurry Explosives Site and devise a cleanup plan to address any potential threat that the site could pose to the surrounding residential areas.

Contacts

If you would like to be placed on the contact list, or have any questions or concerns about the investigation and cleanup of the Cook Slurry Explosives Site, please feel free to contact one of the following EPA representatives:

Jennifer Chergo
Office of Public Affairs and Involvement
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1595 Wynkoop Street
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 312-6601, or
1-800-227-8917, ext. 3126601
chergo.jennifer@epa.gov

Paul Peronard
EPA On-Scene Coordinator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1595 Wynkoop Street
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 312-6808, or
1-800-227-8917, ext. 3126808
peronard.paul@epa.gov

Sonya Pennock
Manager, Office of Public Affairs and Involvement
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1595 Wynkoop Street
Denver, CO 80202
(303) 312-6600, or
1-800-227-8917, ext. 3126600
pennock.sonya@epa.gov