NPL Site Narrative for Witco Chemical Corp. (Oakland Plant)

WITCO CHEMICAL CORP. (OAKLAND PLANT)
Oakland, New Jersey

Conditions at proposal (June 24, 1988): Witco Chemical Corp. has operated a chemical research laboratory and pilot plant since 1966 in an industrial park at 100 Bauer Drive in the City of Oakland, Bergen County, New Jersey. The 9-acre site is in an industrial area next to a small lake (Hoppers Lake).

During 1966-83, Witco discharged its laboratory waste waters to a series of six seepage pits excavated in a stratified drift aquifer used locally for domestic and industrial purposes. In March 1982, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) inspected the Witco facility to review operations and waste water management practices. NJDEP analysis of waste water identified petroleum hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds. Subsequently, Witco submitted a waste water management plan to NJDEP, which included complete elimination of subsurface discharges of waste waters.

On July 16, 1982, NJDEP issued a directive requiring Witco to: (1) submit a plan to eliminate the discharge of waste waters to ground water; and (2) conduct an investigation to determine the nature and extent of possible soil and ground water contamination resulting from past practices. On October 28, 1982, Witco submitted a plan to drill and sample three shallow borings and install and sample four wells. This investigation was completed in the fall of 1982.

In accordance with the State's directive, Witco installed a 7,000-gallon fiberglass tank to receive laboratory waste water in February 1984. Noncontact cooling water is discharged to Hoppers Lake under a New Jersey Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit. A fresh water wetland is within 1 mile of the site. Franklin Lake, which is located within 3 miles downstream, is used for recreational activities.

Dieldrin, 4,4'-DDE, 4,4'-DDT, chloroform, and carbon tetrachloride are present in soil at the site, according to a 1983 report of a Witco contractor. Soil at the site is permeable and ground water shallow (23 feet in some cases), conditions that facilitate movement of contaminants into ground water. An estimated 42,700 people obtain drinking water from public and private wells within 3 miles of the site.

Witco retained a consultant to prepare a remedial plan to remove the deactivated seepage pit system. A series of soil borings were drilled to delineate the extent of soil contamination underlying the pits and to classify those soils as hazardous or nonhazardous. The remedial plan was formalized in July 1987, and Witco began work on November 30, 1987. Residual sludges from the six seepage pits were transported to a hazardous waste facility regulated under Subtitle C of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA); the tanks and other equipment were removed and disposed; contaminated soils were excavated and removed to a RCRA-regulated facility; and the site was backfilled and graded. The closure was completed in January 1988.

Status (October 4, 1989): EPA is investigating the possibility of Witco conducting a remedial investigation/ feasibility study to determine the type and extent of contamination at the site and identify alternatives for remedial action.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at ATSDR - ToxFAQs (http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.