

BLADENSBURG ACETYLENE PLANT

Hyattsville, Maryland

Site Location

The Bladensburg Acetylene Plant site is located in Prince George's County less than ½ mile east of the District of Columbia. The site is in an industrial area, west of Kenilworth Avenue where it exits the Baltimore-Washington Parkway (I-295) and east of the Anacostia River Park.

Site History

Air Products and Chemicals, Inc., a gas cylinder filling and distribution facility, purchased the site in 1960 from Southern Oxygen. Before Southern Oxygen, the facility was a small private air plant. Air separation plants at the site go back to World War II. At the time Air Products owned the site, there were three holding tanks, a disposal pit, an overflow lagoon, and five underground storage tanks (three fuel tanks, a waste oil tank, and an acetylene tank).

In 1983, an on-site tanker ruptured and released about 5,000 gallons of diesel fuel. The soil was removed and taken to a landfill.

In May 1990, wooden and metal containers of waste (solidified ink, etc.) were unearthed at the site during the construction of a parking lot by Air Products, Inc. The solvent odors resulted in two construction workers requiring medical attention. The wastes were excavated and removed from the site.

Environmental Investigations

The Bladensburg Acetylene Plant site was identified in the 1979 *Waste Disposal Site Survey* prepared by the Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations of the House Committee on Interstate and Foreign Commerce (The Eckhardt Report) due to trace quantities of heavy metals in the sludge.

In September 1980, a *Field Trip Report* was prepared following a site inspection by state, county and local officials as a result of the Eckhardt Report. The report stated that the by-product of acetylene manufacturing was calcium carbonate sludge, which has a pH of 9. The sludge was pumped to lagoons where it was held and periodically removed by Chem Line Corporation. The sludge solidified along the sides and bottom of the lagoon, making its own seal. Chem Line sold the sludge as a soil conditioner for acid soils. The report further noted there had been no problems resulting from the operation of the lagoons, and the concentrations of heavy metals were at trace levels. (The sludge had been tested and approved for use as a soil treatment.)

In November 1980, a *Contamination Report* noted that since such a poor water-producing formation underlies the site, it was doubtful there were any water-supply wells in the area. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) reported it did not have any information regarding surface impoundments or injection wells that could impact groundwater in the vicinity of the site.

A November 1990 *Site Visit Summary* prepared by the Maryland Department of Environment (MDE) reported that trenches dug on site in June 1990, as a result of uncovering containers of waste during the

construction of a parking lot, found dry and semi-dry paint and ink residue in deteriorating drums and barrels. Results of chemical analyses made at the time indicated the presence of paint thinner, lacquer thinner and turpentine. Soil was excavated until no volatile organic compounds were detected and only very low levels of several metals were found. The excavation, approximately 50 feet x 50 feet x 15 feet deep, was backfilled. The excavated material was separated into two piles: a waste pile and an excavated-soil pile.

Air Products, Inc. stated they had not disposed of anything on the site and that they had no prior knowledge that the waste material existed on the site. Investigation into the situation suggested Southern Oxygen, the previous owner of the property, obtained the ink from the Bureau of Printing and Engraving and tried to make paint from the ink during World War II.

When MDE requested a Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System (CERCLIS) listing of the Air Products, Inc. site in June 1990, it was discovered that Bladensburg Acetylene Plant (MD-39) had been listed at the same address.

In July 1991, EPA prepared a final *Site Inspection Report* for the Bladensburg Acetylene project.

Current Status

This site is on the State Master List that identifies potential hazardous waste sites in Maryland. The Master List includes sites currently identified by EPA's CERCLIS. EPA has given the site a designation of No Further Remedial Action Planned (NFRAP). The designation of NFRAP by EPA does not mean that MDE has reached the same conclusion concerning further investigation at the site. The information contained in the fact sheet presents a summary of past investigations and site conditions currently known to MDE.

Contact

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