

Floor Removal and Soil Cleanup Planned at Site

ABB Manufacturing Plant
Bloomington, Indiana

July 2009

Public meeting to be held

EPA will discuss the work being done at the plant and answer questions of those people living near the former plant site during a public meeting:

Thursday, July 9, 6:30 p.m.
Monroe County Public Library
Meeting Room 1B
303 E. Kirkwood Ave.
Bloomington

For more information

For questions or comments about the ABB cleanup contact:

Tom Alcamo

EPA Remedial Project Manager
Superfund Division
(mail code SR-6J)
312-886-7278
alcamo.thomas@epa.gov

Dave Novak

EPA Community Involvement
Coordinator
Superfund Division
(mail code SI-7J)
312-886-7478
novak.dave@epa.gov

EPA Region 5 toll-free:

800-621-8431,
9:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m., weekdays

EPA Chicago address:

EPA Region 5
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Chicago, IL 60604

The remaining concrete slab from the former Westinghouse Electric/ABB manufacturing plant will be removed and soil under the slab will be excavated as part of a cleanup project slated to begin this June. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said this work will probably be the final cleanup activity at the site located at 300 N. Curry Pike in Bloomington.

During the production of capacitors for the electric power industry, the former Westinghouse Electric plant released hazardous polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). Other hazardous substances such as volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were also used in the plant by Westinghouse and ABB. PCBs were disposed of in floor drains and the contaminated sewers under the facility. Based upon sampling, EPA expects 15,000 tons of PCB-contaminated material will be excavated and disposed of off-site in approved landfills. Another 19,000 tons of less-contaminated material will be disposed of off-site in a special waste landfill or reused on-site if the pollutant concentrations are low enough. The dividing line for “less” contamination is 50 parts PCBs per million parts soil. Parts per million is abbreviated ppm. Material containing more than 50 ppm is considered hazardous by EPA standards and must be handled differently.

Cleanup activities should begin in early July. A cleanup contractor is being hired by ABB and CBS Corp. to do the cleanup work. EPA will be overseeing the cleanup activities on-site and the state of Indiana,



The sprawling ABB manufacturing plant in Bloomington, Ind., (insert) has been reduced to an enormous concrete slab that will be removed in a cleanup project this summer. Contaminated soil underneath the slab will be excavated and tested for pollution concentrations before disposal.

Monroe County and city of Bloomington will also be involved in ensuring the cleanup is done correctly. It is expected work will be completed before the end of the year.

Site background

The ABB property covers nearly 148 acres with the large plant itself about 10 acres in size. The surrounding area is mixed residential, commercial and industrial buildings.

Prior to 1990, the facility was owned and operated by Westinghouse Electric Corp., now doing business as CBS. In 1990 ABB became the sole owner and operator. The facility closed in 1998, and most of the machinery and equipment was dismantled and removed during 1999 and 2000. PCBs were used in the production of capacitors until 1977. During the late 1980s several sampling projects outside the manufacturing facility revealed PCBs had contaminated soil on the site. Low levels of PCBs and other hazardous substances were also present in water samples. CBS in the early- and mid-1990s completed cleanup activities for areas outside the manufacturing plant through legal agreements with EPA, and 37,000 tons of contaminated material were removed.

Beginning in 1998, ABB began investigating pollution under the concrete floor slab of the plant. In 2006 ABB completed demolition activities at the former facility but the concrete floor was kept in place. EPA, ABB and CBS reached a legal agreement in 2007 where the companies would pay for additional investigations to determine the extent of the contamination underneath the large floor and around the site.

About 4,000 samples were taken and results indicated PCBs and VOCs had leaked from the sewer system and contaminated areas under the concrete slab out into other sections of the site. In some areas, contamination has soaked into the soil to the top of the bedrock, 26 feet underground.

In the legal agreement between EPA and the responsible parties, it was determined an industrial cleanup standard would be used at the site. The PCB cleanup criteria for concrete and soil less than 7 feet deep is an average of 10 ppm with an average concentration of 25 ppm for soil deeper than 7 feet. Cleanup standards for a VOC called trichlorethylene is 5 ppm on average and 7 ppm on average for another VOC called perchlorethylene. Cleanup criteria for other hazardous substances in the soil have been developed based upon Indiana Department of Environmental Management industrial standards for the protection of underground water supplies. Underground water is called "ground water" in environmental terms.

Cleanup activities

A plan for the cleanup called the "Remediation Work Plan" has been developed by CBS and ABB and was reviewed by EPA. The Remediation Work Plan is available for your review at the Monroe County Public Library, 303 E. Kirkwood, Bloomington, Ind., or on the Web site maintained by the COPA organization: www.copa.org.

During the cleanup activities, a number of health and safety procedures will be in place to ensure the site contamination does not affect nearby residents or workers. Air monitors will surround the site to evaluate contamination levels. If unacceptable releases occur, actions will be taken to ensure people are protected. Special trucks will be used to carry the waste to off-site landfills to prevent spills. The Remediation Work Plan describes the procedures to be used to ensure the cleanup is completed without putting nearby residents or on-site workers at risk.

Ground water investigation

In another part of the legal agreement, CBS and ABB will pay for a ground-water investigation. The study is now under way and includes the sampling of nearby springs and completing dye trace studies to determine if PCBs or other substances have affected the underground water supplies.