



ALCO PACIFIC LEAD BATTERY REMOVAL SITE

U. S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 9 • SAN FRANCISCO • JUNE 1998

Carson, California

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has developed this fact sheet to inform the public about activities to take place at the Alco Pacific Lead Battery (Alco) removal site in Carson, California. An EPA *removal* involves actions taken quickly to mitigate a potentially dangerous environmental situation. At the Alco site, EPA's Emergency Response capabilities have been activated due to the imminent and substantial endangerment of human health and the environment presented by this site.

The Site

The Alco site, located at 16914 South Broadway in Carson, California (see map this page), is an abandoned acid battery breaking and secondary lead recycling facility. Surrounded by a chain-link fence, the property consists of two warehouses and equipment used in the processing activities that occurred here. These activities consisted of the recovery, smelting, refinement and resale of scrap lead obtained primarily from used automobile batteries. The lead was generally sold in ingot form to automobile battery manufacturing companies. In addition to lead ingots, Alco made lead sailboat keel ballasts for local sailboat manufacturers. These lead recycling activities took place from about 1950 to 1989.

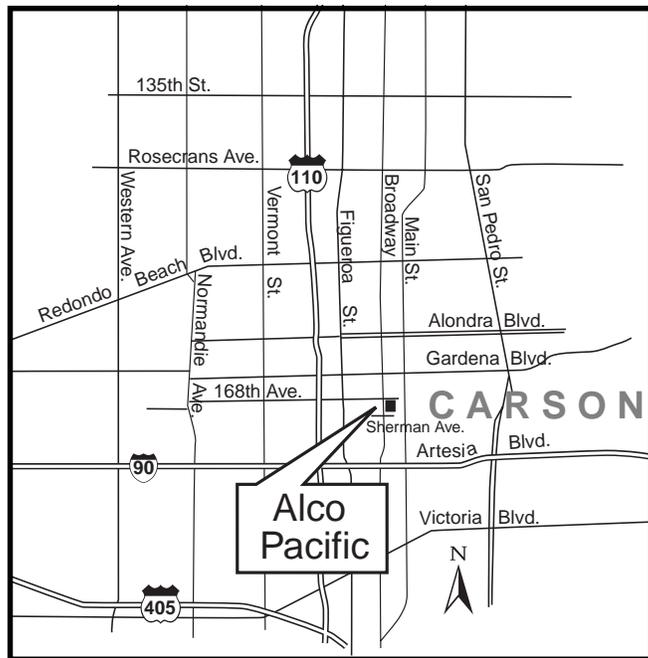
Contamination at the Site

Beginning in 1993, the California EPA Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) took actions that re-

moved several tons of hazardous waste from the site. Additional assessments by DTSC in 1997 indicated extensive lead contamination remained in concentrations ranging from 520 mg/kg to 450,000 mg/kg. Other contaminants found at significant concentrations were arsenic, antimony, cadmium, copper and zinc. Following these assessments, DTSC requested assistance from the federal EPA in mitigating the immediate hazards posed by the open disposal of approximately 200 tons of lead-contaminated waste. EPA conducted its own assessment which confirmed the State's findings.

Threat to Human Health and the Environment

The high concentrations of the contaminants found at the site are direct hazards to human health and the environment because they are exposed to wind and rain and can be inhaled or ingested by people near the site. Lead is particularly dangerous as it can cause birth defects and permanently decrease intelligence in children. Lead exposure may increase blood pressure in middle-aged men and, at high levels, can severely damage the brain and kidneys in both adults and children. Arsenic is a known human carcinogen,



Location of Alco Pacific Lead Battery site

and cadmium is a suspected human carcinogen. The other hazardous substances found at the site (antimony, copper and zinc) present additional human health concerns.

The Alco site also presents a potential threat to water supplies because lead and heavy metal-contaminated wastes were disposed of on the ground and in a dry well. Following the removal action, an extensive soil and groundwater investigation will be conducted to determine the threat to groundwater or drinking water supplies.

Planned Removal Actions

The primary objective of EPA's removal action is to eliminate the immediate threat to public health by removing hazardous levels of lead and

other heavy metals from paved surface areas, processing equipment and other on-site structures. Processing equipment, warehouse buildings and other above-ground structures will be dismantled to properly remove the contamination and then removed to provide access and safe working conditions. All equipment and structures will be decontaminated in accordance with EPA's hazardous debris regulations prior to off-site disposal. Wastewater generated from decontamination activities may be treated and discharged in accordance with local sewer discharge limits. **An extensive dust suppression and air monitoring program will be implemented to protect workers and the public and during demolition and other dust-generating activities. As an interim measure, a polymer sealant was applied to surface areas to control dust emissions in May 1998.**

Who Will Do the Work

The cleanup of the Alco Pacific Lead Battery site will be conducted in three phases. The removal action (Phase 1), under federal EPA lead, will address the immediate hazards to public health by removing surface contamination at the site. This work will actually be conducted by a group that was formed by some of the potentially responsible parties (PRPs) at the site. PRPs are those parties who owned, operated or disposed of waste at the site. The PRPs and their contractors will be working under strict EPA direction and oversight. Phase 2 will investigate the subsurface, and DTSC will be the lead agency for this work as well as for any Phase 3 soil or groundwater cleanup actions that may be necessary.

Removal action at the Alco site is scheduled to begin June 23, 1998 and may take one month to complete. ■

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For More Information

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