



EPA Begins Cleanup Work at the Deferiet Paper Mill Site – Deferiet Village, Jefferson County, New York

Community Update

July 2017

If you have any questions or would like additional information regarding the Site, please contact one of the following:

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<https://response.epa.gov/deferietpapermillrv2>

Site Background

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) received a request from Jefferson County, New York to conduct an environmental assessment at the former Deferiet Paper Mill Site located in the Village of Deferiet, New York in late 2015. The facility is located at 400 Anderson Avenue, Deferiet, New York and encompasses approximately 48 acres with a series of buildings that housed the former paper mill and a hydroelectric power-plant. The original mill manufactured paper of varying types, including newsprint and glossy magazine paper. The hydroelectric power-plant was built by the mill to generate steam which supplied electrical power for the machinery as well as the facilities. The paper mill has been abandoned since the mid-1980s, and with the exception of the power plant, is in a severe state of disrepair. In March 2016, EPA performed an emergency response at the site in order to stabilize asbestos-containing material (ACM) along an easement that is used by the employees at the power plant on the property. In June 2017, EPA conducted an assessment for additional ACM throughout the site buildings to determine eligibility for a removal action. During the assessment, abandoned drums and containers were discovered at two locations on the site.

Site Investigation

More than 100 containers including 4,500 gallon tanks, 55-gallon drums and industrial totes were found on the property. It was observed that several of these containers have holes, are bulging and leaking contents onto the ground. EPA sampled a variety of the containers located on-site and discovered that many contained hazardous substances such as volatile organic compounds, heavy metals and other contaminants containing hazardous characteristics. During the assessment, EPA field tested over 75 percent of the containers and found many to contain corrosive and unstable substances and to be stored in unsafe conditions with potential exposure to trespassers.

Next Steps

EPA will begin securing the building that houses the majority of the containers in order to prevent any illegal entry to the facility. The next step will be to stabilize the contents of the tanks, drums, totes and other containers. The waste products will be prepared for off-site disposal and delivery to appropriate and permitted facilities. EPA is still evaluating the results of the asbestos assessment conducted at the site earlier this year. A decision will be made separately about the asbestos and whether it will be addressed with an appropriate action in the near future. Further updates will be provided when the need arises.