

CORRECTED FACT SHEET



Hazardous Waste Storage and Treatment Permit

Romic Chemical Corporation
2081 Bay Road, East Palo Alto, California 94303
EPA ID No. CAD 009 452 657

INTRODUCTION

EPA issued a permit decision for Romic Chemical Corp. on July 27, 1990. On Sept. 17, 1990, the Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Company (PAPMWC) filed an appeal of the permit. PAPMWC claimed that an error in the fact sheet caused confusion when compared with correct information in the final permit. On March 21, 1991, EPA Administrator William Reilly sent the permit back to the EPA Regional Office to provide a further public comment opportunity due to the error in the fact sheets. This fact sheet is being provided to the public at Administrator Reilly's direction.

On May 5, 1989, Romic, then operating under RCRA Interim Status, applied to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Region IX, for a federal permit to continue operation of its hazardous waste facility. EPA and the State of California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) issued two fact sheets on the permit, neither of which fully explained that Romic would be using two new storage buildings to store hazardous waste. Although EPA's draft permit identified all of the units, the fact sheets erroneously referred to "a new drum building." (See Nov. 15, 1989, fact sheet, page 2, "[T]he facility proposes to construct a new drum storage building."; and March 15, 1990, fact sheet, page 1, "[T]he proposed...changes will require Romic to...construct a new drum building."). In fact, both West Building No. 1 and No. 2 are new structures. The draft permit also authorized Romic to rebuild a third unit, the fuel liquefaction unit, which was not specifically mentioned in the fact sheet.

To address these erroneous statements and oversights, EPA is distributing this corrected fact sheet. EPA is accepting comments on West Building No. 1, the drum storage building not mentioned in the previously issued fact sheets. In addition, commenters may submit comments on any issue that the commenter might not have raised due to the error in the earlier fact sheet. Please be aware that comments are on the EPA draft permit only. DTSC will receive all comments and forward them to the EPA.

Building No. 1 is designed to store acids and caustics. The building is divided in half by a wall which acts as a barrier between the acidic and caustic waste. Each half of the building has the dimensions of 30 X 29 feet and has a design capacity to store 160 55-gallon drums. The building has been constructed with a fire sprinkler system and secondary containment. Although the building is constructed, it will not be used to store hazardous waste until a decision on the federal permit has been made.

The remainder of this fact sheet provides details of the historical and current hazardous waste activities at the Romic site, the permitting changes approved by the EPA and DTSC, and the public participation process so that you will have a context for any comments you may wish to make.

FACILITY BACKGROUND

Romic has been operating a solvent recycling facility in East Palo Alto since 1964. The approximately 14-acre facility is located in an industrial area, about 1/2 mile west of San Francisco Bay. The facility is bordered by auto dismantling facilities on the south and west and by tidal sloughs, marshlands, and a former salt evaporation pond on the north and east. Previously, the facility consisted of two hazardous waste storage buildings and one tank treatment and storage area. Currently, Romic treats wastewater and recycles solvent wastes from many sources, including paint, ink, recording tape, adhesive, steel, automotive, electronics and pharmaceutical manufacturers and other industries. No hazardous waste disposal currently occurs at the site.

From the 1940's to the early 1980's, facility operators discharged a variety of hazardous waste into two ponds located on-site. The hazardous waste disposed of consisted of dimethyl sulfoxide salts, vinyl can lining materials and solvent recycling wastes. The ponds are suspected to be a source of ground water contamination and there is evidence to suggest that there may be off-site contamination; however, evidence to date does not suggest that this contamination poses a present human health hazard. The facility is developing an action plan to remediate contamination under the direction of EPA through a separate action (known as a 3008(h) Order). The specific clean-up plans are not covered by these permits, except to require that Romic remediate the contamination as a condition for continued operation. The ponds themselves were filled in, and covered with a synthetic cover and concrete in 1980.

WASTE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

Romic proposed to continue to receive, store, treat and recycle approximately 7 million gallons per year of hazardous wastes regulated by federal and state laws and regulations. These wastes contain solvents which would be reclaimed, using distillation and blending, to produce reusable solvents and fuel-grade materials. The fuel-grade materials are typically used as a fuel supplement in rotary cement kilns.

The proposed federal permit requires Romic to use a revised operation plan and allow construction of two new drum storage buildings. The revised operation plan also contains a comprehensive waste analysis plan and handling procedures. The new drum storage buildings would allow Romic to stack drums two-high, rather than three-high as it did when just two drum storage buildings were in use. (Because of the appeal and requirement to re-notice this permit decision, EPA and DTSC have not yet allowed Romic to use its newly-constructed storage buildings for storage of hazardous waste.) The revised operation plan does not allow the facility to increase the volume of the hazardous waste which may be stored at the facility. The DTSC permit modification also includes conditions on hazardous waste activities not regulated by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA).

ENFORCEMENT AND SAFETY HISTORY

DTSC inspected the Romic facility most recently on Dec. 20, 1989. Generally, DTSC found Romic to be operating safely and in compliance with laws and regulations.

Romic has experienced accidental chemical spills and leaks. The largest spill occurred in 1984 when tank equipment failure resulted in the loss of less than 450 gallons of the solvent picoline. More recently, in Jan. 1989, a truck released 20 to 25 gallons of diesel fuel. Both of these spills happened on paved portions of the facility and were immediately cleaned up. Neither company employees nor nearby residents have ever been injured as a result of spills or leaks. In addition to the spills and leaks mentioned above, the only other recorded incident occurred in May 1989, when a fire broke out in the solvent blending area; the cause of the fire was a faulty pump motor. The fire was controlled by the local fire department using fire fighting equipment provided by the facility. No employees were injured as a result of the incident.

As described above, there is contamination on the site, and possibly off-site. This contamination probably resulted from hazardous waste management practices that were standard procedure several years ago, e.g., allowing liquid waste to evaporate from surface ponds. The Romic ponds were closed 11 years ago. The clean-up of this contamination is addressed under, "Facility Background," above.

EXPLANATION OF DRAFT FEDERAL PERMIT CONDITIONS

The EPA reviewed the Romic Chemical Corporation Part B Application (dated May and Aug. 1989) and supplemental documents (dated Aug. 30, 31 and Sept. 25, 1989) and deemed them to be complete.

The EPA prepared a draft permit for this facility. All conditions and terms of the EPA permit are required pursuant to RCRA and Title 40, Code of Federal Regulations, Parts 124 and 260 through 270.

The Draft Federal Permit is divided into the following sections:

Part I: Standard Conditions

Part II: General Facility Conditions

Part III: Container Storage

Part IV: Storage and Treatment in Tanks

**Part V: Specific Conditions for Corrective Action
for Continuing or Newly Discovered Release**

Part I contains requirements applicable to all facilities such as severability, permit expiration, inspection and entry, and reporting of releases.

Part II contains operating requirements for the facility such as waste analysis, personnel training, emergency response, record keeping and reporting, and closure.

Parts III and IV contain operating requirements for management of wastes in tanks and containers, secondary containment, and requirements for the handling of reactive and incompatible wastes.

Part V contains requirements and procedures that the facility must follow to address hazardous waste contamination at existing or newly-identified solid waste management units. At the direction of EPA, under what is known as a 3008(h) order, the facility is developing an action plan to remediate contamination. The corrective action portion of the permit makes clean-up of that contamination a requirement for continued operation of the facility.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

EPA Region 9 is providing public notice and an opportunity for additional public comment period under 40 CFR 124.10 to comply with the order of Administrator Reilly in response to the appeal filed by the Palo Alto Park Mutual Water Company. Section 124.10 provides that public notice shall allow at least 45 days for public comment. This comment period will begin on Sept. 4, 1991 and end on Oct. 18, 1991.

A public hearing may be held if there is significant public interest. Submit written requests for a public hearing, including the issues to be raised, to DTSC. Written requests for a public hearing must be received by Oct. 18, 1991. If a public hearing is held, EPA will give 30 days prior notice to the public. Written and oral comments will be accepted at any such hearing.

The permit application, draft federal permit, original fact sheets, the appeal, EPA's response, and Administrator Reilly's order are available for review and copying at the DTSC address below and at the repository located at:

**San Mateo County Public Library
East Palo Alto Branch
2415 University Avenue
East Palo Alto, CA 94303
(415) 321-7712**

Written comments on the federal permit and supplementary documents may be mailed to DTSC at the address shown below. DTSC will forward all comments received to EPA for consideration.

**California Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Toxic Substances Control, Region 2
700 Heinz Avenue, Bldg. F, Suite 200
Berkeley, CA 94710
Attn: Sheila Alfonso
(510) 540-3968**

Final decisions to approve or modify applicable sections of the permit will be made after all comments have been considered. Notice of the final decision will be given to the applicant, to each person who has submitted written comments, and anyone who requests it and will be available at the public repository.