

International Bildrite, Inc. Site Cleanup Remedy Open for Public Comment

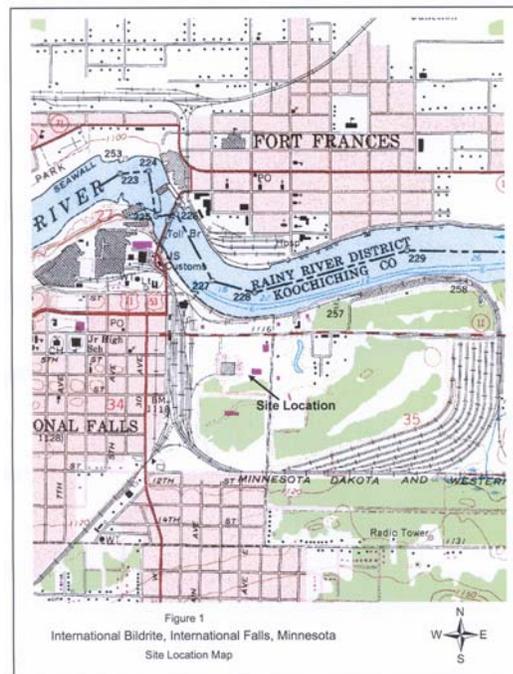
Remediation program fact sheet g-36-01, October 2005

This Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) fact sheet describes the actions taken to remedy human health exposure, leaching, and runoff from contaminated soils at the International Bildrite, Inc. site and to propose a site closure plan. Details about submitting public comments for either proposal can be found at the end of this fact sheet.

What is the facility's history?

International Bildrite, Inc. (IBI) manufactures fiberboard at a 1.5-acre site in an International Falls, Minnesota, industrial park. LPA Flaked Pitch, an asphaltic-like product, coats one side of the fiberboard. The pitch is stored in a separate building on the southeast side of the property. The site boundaries include Highway 11 to the north and County Road 332 to the east. The Rainy River is approximately 660 feet to the north.

During a 1998 inspection, MPCA staff found LPA Flaked Pitch had spilled and was mixed in with soils between the site's storage and manufacturing buildings. Subsequent soil sample testing showed that the pitch contained carcinogenic polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) at levels exceeding those considered safe for human health and short-term inhalation exposure for workers. The pitch concentrations also had the potential to run off and contaminate surface water. As a result, MPCA staff required the company to take corrective actions to clean up the impacted soil.



IBI is a 1.5-acre site within an industrial park at 101 Fourth Street East, International Falls, Minnesota. From the site, the nearest residential property is one-quarter mile southwest, and the nearest school is one-half mile west.

What is the site's geology and hydrogeology?

Soils in the site's immediate area are predominately peat and clay. Beneath these soils is an impermeable clay layer which protects groundwater by preventing infiltration from rainwater and promoting surface water runoff. The groundwater is in a layer of bedrock 20 to 90 feet below ground surface level.

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What are the site's potential risks related to the carcinogenic PAH contamination?

Potential human health risks include: skin contact and inhalation of the highly carcinogenic, PAH-contaminated asphaltic-like pitch. When the flaked form of pitch is used, inhalation and accidental ingestion risks would be greatest when the flakes become windborne.

IBI draws water used for non-potable purposes from a 238-foot well connected to the bedrock aquifer below the site. IBI's well is not considered to be at risk because the impermeable clay layer beneath the site prevents rainwater infiltration into the water table. Also, carcinogenic PAHs do not readily dissolve in water or are very mobile.

As a result, the main environmental risk is contaminated runoff flowing to nearby low areas and surface water bodies.

To what extent has the site been cleaned up?

The MPCA uses a tiered, risk-based decision-making approach when cleaning up sites.

At IBI, MPCA staff first determined the LPA Flaked pitch was non-hazardous. Next, they tested the pitch and soil mixture sample to find out whether it exceeded the state's three cleanup thresholds: (1) ability to cause unacceptable impacts to industrial workers through inhalation, ingestion and / or skin contact from the ground surface to four feet below it; (2) short-term industrial worker exposure to the top four feet of soil; and, (3) potential impacts to surface waters. Test results showed the soil and pitch mixture exceeded the first two cleanup thresholds and that contaminated water had run off to a nearby area.

What cleanup actions were required?

IBI was required to excavate 252 cubic yards of pitch-contaminated soils that exceeded the industrial land-use threshold, the most conservative of the three related thresholds. Excavation removed existing runoff to low-lying areas and helped prevent the potential for future runoff issues.

Excavation did not exceed 2.5 feet below the ground surface; soil samples collected at the bottom of the excavation site tested lower than the related industrial cleanup threshold.

The MPCA is also requiring the company to restrict future use of three contaminated areas that exceed the carcinogenic PAH cleanup level for unrestricted use but are below cleanup levels for industrial use. These corrective actions are the only ones considered to be protective of human health and the environment.

Once the MPCA receives confirmation that the paperwork related to the corrective actions is completed and filed with the County Recorder, the remedy is considered complete, the risks addressed, and the site can be closed.

What other corrective actions were required?

- Store LPA pitch flakes or pellets only inside the storage shed and not outside of any buildings;
- Keep the concrete driveway outside the storage shed clean;
- Imbed a hay bale containment berm in the soil along the pavement's southern edge that collects spilled LPA pitch flakes or pellets but allows water to pass through. This berm must be changed frequently and the contaminated bales must become part of the fiberboard manufacturing process;
- Install an enclosed conveyor belt system to transport LPA pitch flakes or pellets into the manufacturing process to stop future spills.



What voluntary actions did IBI take?

- IBI voluntarily switched from using LPA Flaked Pitch to LPA pitch pellets in their manufacturing process. These pellets are slightly larger than the size of an M&M candy and have the advantages of being easier to clean up and do not become airborne.
- At a later date, IBI voluntarily installed a closed tank inside the building to receive liquid asphalt and directly transfer into manufacturing process to stop future spills.
- The storage shed still contains some LPA pitch pellets as back-up supplies only.

Several site-related reports are available at the International Fall Public Library and the MPCA office at 525 Lake Avenue South, Suite 400, Duluth, Minnesota.

Those interested in additional information should contact:

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How can I provide comments about the remedy and proposed site closure?

The MPCA staff will accept written public comments on the remedy and proposed site closure from October 19 through 4:30 p.m. on November 17, 2005.

What happens after the public comment period?

After MPCA staff have reviewed all public comments, the agency will prepare a summary of the comments, explain the rationale for making revisions based on comments received, and describe any applicable remedy modifications.

Where can I get more information?