



NEWS RELEASE

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Illinois EPA Refers AB Specialty Silicones, LLC to Attorney General for Enforcement

Agency Cites Release of Contaminants to the Air and Surface Water

SPRINGFIELD – Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Acting Director John J. Kim has referred an enforcement action to the Illinois Attorney General's office against AB Specialty Silicones located at 3790 Sunset Avenue, Waukegan (Lake County). The referral cites the release of contaminants following an explosion and firefighting efforts at the plastics plant.

On May 3, 2019, the Illinois EPA received reports of an explosion at a plastics plant in Lake County from the Illinois Emergency Management Agency. Local firefighters reported a white cloud and requested down-range air monitoring, and Illinois EPA requested the air monitoring support from U.S. EPA Region V. U.S. EPA began performing air monitoring and observed strong odors in some locations. U.S. EPA also noted that efforts were made to try and contain the fire suppression water, but the runoff overwhelmed the detention basin and entered storm sewers, which drain west with an eventual outfall to the Des Plaines River. It is unknown whether any contaminated material reached the Des Plaines River, which is at or above flood stage. Local access points to the River were closed as a precautionary measure.

The site remains under control of the coroner's office and the Office of the State Fire Marshal as the investigation continues. Therefore, no clean-up activities are occurring on-site. The company has agreed to several measures requests by U.S. EPA, which include securing the site, public/work safety, cleanup of any hazardous substances and protecting storm drains from further impacts.

The Illinois EPA indicates in its referral that, as a result of the explosion, AB Specialty Silicones violated provision of the Illinois Environmental Protection Act and Illinois Pollution Control Board regulations. Those include allowing the discharge of contaminated runoff from its facility to waters of the State and causing or allowing the discharge or emission of contaminants into the environment to cause air pollution.

In the referral, the Agency has asked the Attorney General to represent the Agency in ensuring that AB Specialty Silicones coordinates with the Illinois EPA and U.S. EPA to implement specified compliance measures for proper remediation. Any civil penalties will be developed as the case progresses and additional details are obtained.

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