



Water Gremlin update

December 11, 2019

Minnesota Pollution Control Agency | Minnesota Department of Health | Department of Labor and Industry

Agency roles

- MDH:
- DLI:
- MPCA:
- Ramsey County:

- Mid-2018: MDH meets with St. Paul-Ramsey County Public Health on the issue of take-home lead at Water Gremlin
- St. Paul – Ramsey County works with Water Gremlin to address the issue on a voluntary basis
- January 2019: child of a Water Gremlin employee has an elevated blood lead level (EBLL) exceeding 15 ug/dL, triggering more urgent action

- October 2019: Second child with an EBLL above 15 ug/dL; 12 children in total over several years
- MDH consults with Labor & Industry OSHA Program, inspection conducted over weekend
- OSHA issues 72 hour shutdown notice, court hearing held
- Judge agrees and facility is shutdown, issues court orders to correct the problem

Actions Ordered of Water Gremlin

- Cleaning of facility and sealing of floors
- “Bootie” system to prevent movement of lead; enhanced worker hygiene practices
- Cleaning of employee vehicles (300+); most require 2nd cleaning + new floor mats
- Cleaning of employee residences (yet to begin)

Long-Term Actions Ordered of Water Gremlin

- Temporary trailers to be used as locker rooms with “clean-in/clean-out” equipment and procedures (90 days)
- Reconstruction of locker room areas to include showers and adequate changing spaces and lockers (one year)
- Monthly training on proper hygiene when working with lead, more and better safety equipment
- Third party monitoring

- Continue to work with St. Paul – Ramsey County and others on outreach to workers and families
- Continue to offer free blood lead testing
- Provide notification and ensure residential cleanups are done properly
- Work with OSHA to monitor activities at Water Gremlin

OSHA Compliance review

- **Inspection activities at facility**
- **Future actions**



Water Gremlin, White Bear Township

- Began operation in 1950s
- Manufacture lead fishing tackle
- Manufacture lead battery posts (1970s) – two types of lines:
 - Water-based coating
 - Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs) coating
 - Trichloroethylene (TCE)

Water Gremlin – MPCA Permits

- Air emissions
 - Permit first issued in 2000 - VOC emissions
 - Reissued in 2002, 2006
- Hazardous waste license (lead)
- Industrial Stormwater

Water Gremlin – History

- January 2019 – Facility VOC coating lines shut down
 - Exceeding allowed TCE emissions
- March 2019 – Enforceable Agreement signed
 - Stop using TCE
 - Limit emissions of tDCE
 - Conduct air monitoring
 - Conduct site assessments
 - Pay civil penalty and supplemental environmental projects

Water Gremlin – History

- August 2019 – Administrative Order issued:
 - TCE, tDCE and lead around the property
 - Shut down of battery terminal VOC coating lines
 - Sampling around the site
- November 2019 – Administrative Order issued:
 - Hazardous waste (lead) management in building and around site.

Water Gremlin – Monitoring Results

- Air

- Air monitors on-site and off site (9)
- Below VOC and lead limits and health benchmarks

- Surface Water

- Area lakes, streams and ponds for lead and VOCs.
 - Non-detect for TCE, Non-detect for lead except for on WG property.

Water Gremlin – Monitoring Results

- Ground Water
 - VOCs/lead in ground water below building
 - Drinking water is not impacted (MDH well testing)
- Sediments and Soil Vapor
 - Soil vapor impacts are limited to the WG property
 - Limited levels of lead in sediments

Water Gremlin – Next Steps

- VOC coating lines shut down
- VOC treatment below building continues to be effective.
- Continue air monitoring, site assessments and HW management
- Continue inspections
- Continue working on updating permits

Stay informed -- sign up for updates on clipboards tonight or at www.pca.state.mn.us/wg-email

Agency contacts

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