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*Environmental Protection Division  
Water Quality & RCRA (ENV-RCRA)*  
P.O. Box 1663, Mail Stop K490  
Los Alamos, New Mexico 87545  
(505) 667-0633/FAX: (505) 667-5224

Date: January 9, 2008  
Refer To: ENV-RCRA-08-004

CERTIFIED RETURN RECEIPT REQUESTED

Mr. Art Vollmer  
New Mexico Environment Department  
Compliance & Technical Assistance Program  
Hazardous Waste Bureau  
2905 Rodeo Park Drive East, Building 1  
Santa Fe, NM 87505-6303

Dear Mr. Vollmer:

**SUBJECT: UNKNOWN CHEMICALS FROM WHITE ROCK, DESTRUCTION AT TA-49 LOS ALAMOS NATIONAL LABORATORY**

The purpose of this letter is to report the activities associated with the emergency destruction of unknown chemicals discovered abandoned at the Thrift Store located at 13 Sherwood in White Rock, N.M. on December 22, 2007. A volunteer of the Thrift Store discovered a wooden cabinet which had been left outside of the Thrift Store and upon opening the cabinet found nineteen labeled and unlabeled containers of various sizes, some exhibiting crystallization on their inside and outside surfaces.

The Thrift Store contacted the Los Alamos Fire and Police Departments, and personnel were dispatched to the store. Upon evaluating the contents of the cabinet, Los Alamos County personnel requested assistance from LANL Emergency Management & Response (EM&R) and Haz-Mat response personnel LANL EM&R and Haz-Mat personnel responded and a determination was made by the LANL Incident Commander (IC) that the containers posed an imminent threat to human health and safety. The containers were moved by LANL EM&R and Haz-Mat personnel, along with the cabinet they were found in, to TA-49 where two detonations and a burn were conducted to treat the unknown wastes. It was determined that nine of the containers were labeled as followed:

One 500 ml brown glass bottle,  $\frac{3}{4}$  full labeled Tartaric Acid;

Three 500 ml clear glass bottles containing liquids, two nearly full and one  $\frac{3}{4}$  full labeled poison, believed to be either Sodium Hydroxide or Sodium Ammonium Phosphate;

One 500 ml brown glass bottle containing a white powder,  $\frac{3}{4}$  full believed to be either Sodium Hydroxide or Sodium Ammonium Phosphate;



One 500 ml brown glass bottle labeled Potassium Iodide, approximately ½ full;

One 500 ml brown jar containing a white unknown powder approximately ½ full; and

Two "tobacco cans" were determined to be unsafe to open as they had unknown contents, and unknown volumes.

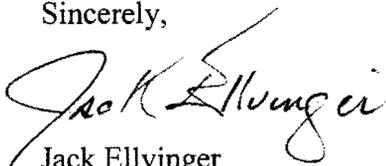
Since the containers were not sealed it could not be verified that the substances inside the containers were actually the substances on the labels. Prior to movement or disposal, MSDSs were referred to for the chemicals identified on the labels. Photos of the containers are attached.

The wastes were treated in two detonations consisting of surrounding the containers with Deta-sheet and remotely initiated with a blasting cap. The wooden cabinet and remaining empty containers with residues were burned.

The emergency disposal was performed by the LANL HAZMAT explosives disposal team between 3:20 PM and 4:10 PM on December 22, 2007. All safety protocols were followed and safe standoff distances determined and observed by emergency personnel. The destructions were complete and samples were taken of the residues remaining from the burn. Based on the analytical results of the residue, the appropriate disposal path will be determined and followed.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 667-0633.

Sincerely,



Jack Ellvinger  
Water Quality & RCRA Group (ENV-RCRA)

JE/lm

Enclosures: a/s

Cy: James Bearzi, NMED/HWB, Santa Fe, NM, w/o enc.  
Michael B. Mallory, PADOPS, w/o enc., A102  
Richard S. Watkins, ADESHQ, w/o enc., K491  
ENV-RCRA, File, w/enc., K490  
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