

#602250301

March 4, 2003

PIATT COUNTY (BEMENT) - High School Mercury Spill

Nyle G. Waters, Principal
Bement High School
201 South Champaign Street
Bement, IL. 61813

Dear Mr. Waters:

Per your request, Cary Ware from this Department conducted indoor air mercury sampling at your school in the chemistry laboratory (H 109A) and storeroom on February 25, 2003. This was necessary to determine if a mercury spill in the storeroom had been cleaned up properly.

Air sampling results indicated that indoor airborne levels were well below the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) clearance level of 1,000 nanograms per cubic meter (ng/m³) of air. However, floor level air samples detected mercury above our guideline. These samples along with the mercury droplets observed on the floor of the storeroom confirm that the mercury spill was not cleaned up properly. Therefore, the following steps should be taken to reduce mercury contamination in the storeroom:

- ▶ Collect the small mercury droplets with adhesive tape or an eye dropper and store in a sealed plastic container until it can be properly disposed.
- ▶ After all visible mercury has been collected, use a mercury cleanup kit to clean the spill area and work into the cracks with a broom or brush. Do not add water. Materials in the mercury spill kit rapidly bind to the remaining mercury and can be swept up with a broom and dustpan. Wash the area with trisodium phosphate detergent solution and rinse with water.
- ▶ Contaminated materials from spills may be discarded along with general trash, but should be placed outside in a safe place until the trash is picked up.
- ▶ Visibly inspect underneath the storage shelves to determine if mercury is present. If there are large amounts of mercury droplets that can not be as easily cleaned as observed in the open areas of the storeroom, an environmental cleanup company should be contacted for assistance.

Page 2

Bement High School Mercury Spill

If you have any questions, please contact Cary Ware or me at our Champaign Regional Office located at 2125 South First Street, Champaign, Illinois 61820-7499, telephone (217) 278-5900, fax (217) 278-5959.

Very truly yours,



Mark Kuechler, P.E.
Regional Engineer

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cc: Champaign Regional Office
Division of Environmental Health ✓
County Health Department