



At a Glance

Why We Did This Project

Our objective was to determine whether EPA Region 4 and the state of North Carolina followed appropriate procedures in addressing claims of an improper asbestos demolition at the Old Davis Hospital site in Statesville, North Carolina.

Under the National Emission Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants (NESHAP), specific work practices must be implemented by the property owner to control the release of asbestos fibers into the air.

In October 2015, a caller contacted the National Response Center with a complaint that a potentially improper demolition was underway at the Old Davis Hospital site and that an unspecified amount of asbestos was potentially released.

This report addresses the following:

- *Cleaning up and revitalizing land.*
- *Partnering with states and other stakeholders.*

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Delayed Cleanup of Asbestos Debris at the Old Davis Hospital Site Necessitates Changes for EPA Region 4 and North Carolina

What We Found

EPA Region 4 and the state of North Carolina followed appropriate procedures at the Old Davis Hospital site. In late October 2015, personnel from the state of North Carolina observed piles of debris at the site suspected of containing asbestos, which they later verified. However, it took over 7 months for the state to request the EPA's assistance in performing a removal of asbestos at the site in early June 2016, during which time there was a potential threat of asbestos exposure.

EPA Region 4 and North Carolina followed procedures at the Old Davis Hospital site; however, those procedures did not result in the timely removal of asbestos that posed a potential threat to human health and the environment.

EPA Region 4 followed its established procedures when it referred the National Response Center notification to North Carolina for review, as North Carolina had delegated authority. However, the state did not take action to timely remediate the site's asbestos-containing waste material and demolition debris. The Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) provides federal authority for responding to releases and potential releases of hazardous substances that may endanger public health or the environment, but North Carolina does not have CERCLA authority. State officials did not fully understand the extent to which the EPA could assist in the removal.

As a result of the state's lack of action, individuals near the demolition site were at risk of asbestos exposure. In June 2016, the EPA used its CERCLA authority to conduct a time-critical removal at the site. In September 2016, the EPA on-scene coordinator reported that the \$1.4 million cleanup of the Old Davis Hospital site was complete.

Recommendations and Planned Agency Corrective Actions

We recommend that EPA Region 4, in coordination with appropriate North Carolina state officials, document clarification of the existing NESHAP authorities. We also recommend that EPA Region 4 implement internal controls to verify North Carolina's enforcement of work practices under the Asbestos NESHAP at demolition and renovation sites, specifically in regard to keeping asbestos-containing debris wet until the debris can be transported to an approved landfill. EPA Region 4 concurred with our draft report findings, with comment, and provided acceptable corrective actions.