

*Status Report and
Identification of Immediate
Response Action Options
for Building 68 Area*



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Pittsfield, Massachusetts

September 1996



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1. Introduction

1.1 General

This document provides a status report on the sampling program being conducted by the General Electric Company (GE) for the soils and sediments in the area adjacent to Building 68 at GE's Pittsfield, Massachusetts facility, and an identification of potential Immediate Response Actions (IRAs) for the Building 68 area, as requested by the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (jointly referred to as the "Agencies").

Sampling and analysis of riverbank soils adjacent to Building 68 in March 1996 (as part of the ongoing investigations of GE's East Street Area 2/USEPA Area 4 site) identified elevated levels of PCBs in the soils. In addition, sampling and analysis of nearby sediments in the Housatonic River in May 1996 identified elevated levels of PCBs in those sediments. In response, GE performed a series of activities under the direction and oversight of the Agencies. These activities have included a review of historical information implementation of institutional controls to supplement those which were previously in place, and the initiation of further field investigations.

GE is completing the additional field investigations to better define the extent of PCBs and other hazardous constituents within the sediments and bank soils. A summary of the results obtained thus far is presented in Section 2. In addition, GE has supplemented the existing institutional controls that were in place for this area with the installation of warning signs and the repair of certain fences near this area, as discussed further in Section 3.3.1.

Once sampling has been completed to delineate the affected area, GE will submit a plan proposing specific further IRAs for this area. To facilitate this effort, GE has identified several potential IRAs that may be applicable and could be implemented for the Building 68 area. Section 3 provides a discussion of these measures.

1.2 Site Description/Background

As illustrated on Figure 1-1, Building 68 is located along the bank of the Housatonic River on the south side of the East Street Area 2/USEPA Area 4 Site. The original Building 68 structure was constructed in 1966. Figure 1-1 illustrates the original location and relative size of Building 68, and several associated storage tanks as depicted on engineering maps prepared by GE in 1969.

In 1969, as part of an expansion of Building 68, an area of concrete pavement was added immediately adjacent to the original building along its west and south sides. Subsequently, in approximately 1970, three drainage pits were constructed to contain storm water and surface runoff from the concrete pavement as well as floor drainage from within Building 68. Appendix A includes an engineering drawing prepared by GE in 1969 depicting the layout and dimensions of these drainage pits.

As previously presented in Section 3.3.6 of the "MCP Interim Phase II Report and Current Assessment Summary for East Street Area 2/USEPA Area 4" (BBL, August 1994), and as shown in Appendix A of this present document, the three Building 68 "Drainage Pits" were located to the south and northeast of the original Building 68 structure. These pits are referred to by GE as Pits "A", "B", and "C" and by the USEPA as Solid Waste Management Unit T-42 in the USEPA's RCRA Corrective Action Permit. Figure 1-1 illustrates the approximate location of these pits. These pits were connected to a pipe which, at that time, apparently led to the Housatonic River. In approximately 1970, the drainage pits were connected to a stormwater interceptor pipe which conveyed overflow from these pits into the 64W oil/water separator. In approximately 1973, a canopy was constructed over the paved areas to the south and west of the original Building 68 structure. In approximately 1978, GE dismantled the tank farm and associated equipment in the original Building 68 structure. Subsequently, in the mid-1980s, GE installed sides on the canopied area so as to construct the Building 68 structure as it exists today. For a short time during the 1980s, this building was used as a

storage area. Prior to this use, the drainage pits were isolated from the stormwater interceptor system. Since that time, the building has been used for empty drum storage. Refer to Figure I-1 for the present extent of Building 68.

In or around 1968, an Aroclor 1260 storage tank located at Building 68 collapsed releasing a portion of its contents onto the bank soil and sediment adjacent to Building 68. According to a GE employee involved in the original cleanup of that release, approximately 1,000 gallons of liquid Aroclor 1260 (which was heated to facilitate pumping) entered the river bank and quickly solidified because of the temperature drop experienced upon its release from the tank, and a portion of the material settled to the river bottom. To the extent possible (based on visual observation), impacted surface trap rock and sediment were excavated and placed in an on-site area. At a later date, this material was again removed and transferred to a secure landfill. This release and cleanup were described in a 1982 report to the Agencies on GE's past hazardous waste disposal practices at the Pittsfield facility, submitted pursuant to Consent Orders executed by GE and the Agencies in 1981. However, recent sampling data indicate that some materials from this release still remain in river bank soil and sediment. A more detailed characterization of soil and sediment in this area is presented in Section 2.