



# **Atlanta and Saint Andrews Bay Train Derailment Youngstown, Florida**



## PREFACE

This report reflects the activities of the Environmental Emergency Branch (EEB) Region IV, EPA, as it was concerned with the captioned event. The report outlines the key actions of the Federal On-Scene Coordinator, the Regional Response Team (RRT), and state, local, and Federal members of the RRT. It reflects the complexity of responding to environmental emergencies and the need to coordinate and plan in advance for a major incident such as this event.

This report is intended to satisfy the requirements of the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan and to help others learn from our experiences.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Al J. Smith', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Al J. Smith, Chief  
Environmental Emergency Branch

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## 1. SUMMARY

At 3:15 a.m. on February 26, 1978, a freight train owned by Atlanta and St. Andrews Bay Railroad derailed two miles north of Youngstown, Florida. Approximately 45 cars of the 120-car train left the tracks.

Eight people were killed by chlorine gas. Another 45 were significantly injured. Originally, 1,000 people were evacuated from the area within two and one-half miles of the wreck site. Later, the evacuation was extended to a seven and one-half to nine and one-half-mile radius affecting 3,500 people.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) office in Atlanta was notified at 6:30 a.m. Al Smith, Chief of EPA's Environmental Emergency Branch, was designated On-Scene Coordinator for the incident and arrived in Youngstown at 10:30 a.m.

By 4:00 p.m., it was possible for the first experienced team to go on-scene. They reported that one of the chlorine cars was punctured; the other appeared to be intact. A liquid propane gas car was sandwiched between a smashed carload of bricks and a leaking car of turpentine.

After consulting with railroad officials, the Regional Response Team decided to have the cleanup contractor pull the damaged chlorine car to a pit, drain it into two ponds and buffer the chlorine with caustic soda. Conditions prevented this from being attempted until February 28. By March 2, it became clear that the chlorine was not dispersing properly and would have to be dumped. The area was clear of chlorine gas an hour later. The buffering ponds were later buried.

Dikes had been constructed around the entire wreck site to prevent surface runoff from entering the water supply of Panama City, Florida.

The undamaged chlorine car was rerailed. At 5:00 p.m. on March 2, the evacuation area was reduced to a two and one-half-mile radius and would remain so until the liquid propane gas car was emptied on March 3.

Water and air sampling was performed throughout the episode. The operation as a whole was a success. The responding agencies reacted professionally and efficiently to ensure safe resolution of the incident.

## 2. THE SITUATION

On February 26, 1978, an Atlanta and St. Andrews Bay Railroad freight train derailed at 3:15 a.m. near Youngstown, Florida. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Environmental Emergency Branch (EEB) office was notified by the company at 6:30 a.m.

Approximately 45 cars of the 120-car train had derailed. The following chemicals were involved:

- Two tank cars of chlorine, each containing 90,000 pounds of the chemical. One was leaking from a one-foot square puncture. About 60,000 pounds (3,500 gallons) of material had escaped;

- Three tank cars of sodium hydroxide;

- Two tank cars of ammonium nitrate;

- One tank car of liquid propane gas;

- Several tank cars containing corrosive compounds.

At the time Al Smith, Chief of EPA EEB, was designated On-Scene Coordinator (OSC) and had arrived in Youngstown, six people were known dead. Chlorine clouds were prevalent in the area. Chemical teams from Olin Matheson and Wyandotte Corporation were on-scene to assist the OSC. The Regional Response Team (RRT) was activated and Jim Littell of EPA's Air Emergency Branch was called in.

At 1:20 p.m., with chlorine still heavy in the area of the wreck site, two members of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) arrived. One of them began putting on an air pack without consulting anyone. Civil Defense coordinator Jim Heisler asked the OSC to inform him that the area was extremely deadly and that no one was allowed in. The NTSB member ignored the OSC's instructions. Afterward, security became a problem for about three hours. As a result, four more people were exposed to the chlorine gas and subsequently admitted to the hospital.

#### Response and Observations: Chronological Events

February 26, 1978

At 4:00 p.m., conditions allowed the first experienced team to go in. Air samples were taken and indicated that chlorine in the air 100 feet away from the ruptured car was less than 1 ppm. The other chlorine car appeared to be intact. The liquid propane gas car was sandwiched between a smashed carload of bricks and a leaking car of turpentine. There was also a car of peanuts that had been fumigated with methyl bromide gas.

At 4:30 p.m., the OSC called a meeting of railroad, local, state, and federal officials. It was decided to wait for the arrival of the Hulcher railroad emergency cleanup crew and then pull the damaged chlorine car to a pit, drain it into two ponds, and buffer the chlorine with caustic soda.

At 4:55 p.m., with the body count at seven, it was reported that a helicopter had sighted an eighth body near the scene. The ambulance team, Mr. Littell, and the OSC retrieved the body of a Caucasian female, 14-15 years old. She was 15 paces from her automobile, apparently after having tried to run and escape the fumes from the wreck 350 yards away. Five other victims had been found within 100 feet of hers earlier in the morning. One had reached a tavern a short distance away and died there; another died in the hospital. All victims had the same physical characteristics: dark-blue skin on upper body;

the face a deep blue, almost purple; both arms clasped to their breasts and substantial frothy sputum around the mouth. The coroner reported that several had their entire eyeballs eaten away and two had broken bones as if they had blindly run into car doors, etc. All victims' lungs were purple instead of pink. All eight had been in cars that stalled and/or had engine failure because the prevailing atmosphere contained little or no oxygen. Forty-five people were admitted to hospitals and another 100 were treated and released. Between 3:00 a.m. and 4:00 a.m., 1,000 people were evacuated from an area within two and one-half miles of the accident site. Note: Medical observers and the OSC felt that, had the accident occurred two miles either way, deaths would have been in the hundreds.

At 10:30 p.m., four deputy sheriffs were overcome by fumes at the command post. Therefore, the evacuation area was increased to seven and one-half to nine and one-half miles around the wreck site, affecting an additional 2,500 people; this brought the total number of evacuees to 3,500.

#### February 27, 1978

Hulcher's crew arrived at 6:55 a.m. and plans were made for moving the damaged chlorine car. The area would be cleared for this effort because another chlorine cloud would be emitted.

The crew attempted to move some of the less potentially hazardous cars but the chlorine was too strong (up to 4 ppm). Driving rains finally precluded moving the chlorine car this day. Dikes were constructed around the entire wreck site to prevent surface runoff from entering Little Bear Creek, which flows to Bear Creek, which feeds Deer Point Lake, the water supply for Panama City, Florida. Mr. Cook of the Panama City Water Supply Department took samples that indicated that there was nothing in the stream. From this day through March 4, air samples were taken and the streams checked at regular intervals (one-to-four times daily). No liquid appeared to have left the scene. Messrs. Littell and Cook, the OSC, and John Powell of the state Department of Environmental Regulation were involved in this effort.



February 28, 1978

At 10:00 a.m., all people except the workers necessary to physically move the chlorine car were evacuated to the command post. A few experts and others with gas masks stayed in their cars along the highway, 250 yards away.

At 10:30 a.m., the chlorine car was moved to a prepared pit and a one-inch-diameter stream was released from the car into a mixing pond where a 50% water-caustic solution was added. This mixture was ultimately passed to a reaction pond of similar size. There was a substantial thermal cloud, but little chlorine was emitted during this two and one-half day operation. Many workers had their gas masks on and off depending on wind conditions. At 11:00 a.m., one of Hulcher's crew was overcome and taken to the hospital. The OSC visited him and determined that he was one who had taken his mask off. He was quite ill but later recovered.

Other cars were rerailed in an effort to reach the liquid propane gas car located at the bottom of a seven-car pileup at the center of the wreck. Equipment was standing by to empty the car. Chlorine continued to be released and mixed with caustic. A problem began to arise with the press; rumors and false stories were being printed.

March 1, 1978

The OSC learned that NTSB personnel were holding daily press conferences and making technical observations to the media concerning cleanup. As a result, the press would question the OSC about why certain alternatives suggested by the NTSB were not considered. The OSC had not been informed of the press conferences.

Work on this day centered on clearing the track and depleting the chlorine in the damaged car. At 2:30 p.m., the OSC learned that there were still 2,000 gallons of chlorine left in the damaged car. He suggested that the rest be dumped and the chlorine cloud endured. The area was secure and Hulcher's crew said that it was possible to do this without injuring the operator. The idea was rejected by the chemical experts.

At 3:30 p.m., an attempt was made to level the damaged chlorine car. It was felt that more drainage and quantity monitoring could be achieved in this manner. Once again, the area was cleared of all noncritical workers, as another cloud was expected.

#### March 2, 1978

At 5:45 a.m., the OSC went on-scene where from a distance of two and one-half miles he saw a huge chlorine cloud. A railroad official told him that the chlorine car had been dumped because no progress was being made. The scene was clear of chlorine one hour later.

By 7:30 a.m., the chlorine car was full of water and rendered inert. The workers no longer had to worry about wind and the possibility of being overcome by chlorine gas.

The track was being cleared to reach the liquid propane gas car. The state of Florida approved the plan to bury the chlorine buffering ponds in situ. Mr. Powell would begin a continuous water sampling program and a long-term site monitoring program that evening.

At 4:15 p.m., the undamaged chlorine car was rerailed. About 2,000 gallons of caustic were added to the chlorine buffer pits to totally neutralize them and adjust the pH. Pit samples revealed the following: pH 4.0, chlorine 22 ppm, alkalinity 3, hardness 64.

The stream adjacent to the wreck site was also sampled. The pH in the tributary was 3.5. One mile downstream it was 6.5. Several dead fish were noted next to the wreck site. They had apparently been killed several days earlier by a small, concentrated dose of chlorine. Other fresh water organisms were unaffected.

At 5:00 p.m., Civil Defense reopened the site to 2,500 residents, leaving an evacuation area of two and one-half miles. This evacuation zone would remain in effect until the liquid propane gas was transferred.

The OSC told railroad officials to cover the two ponds containing the caustic solution. He was concerned about the possibility of the material escaping the area and entering Little Bear Creek. Railroad officials checked with the team from Wyandotte Corporation who advised them not to cover the ponds because they wanted more reaction time. Instead, they pumped in additional caustic.

March 3, 1978

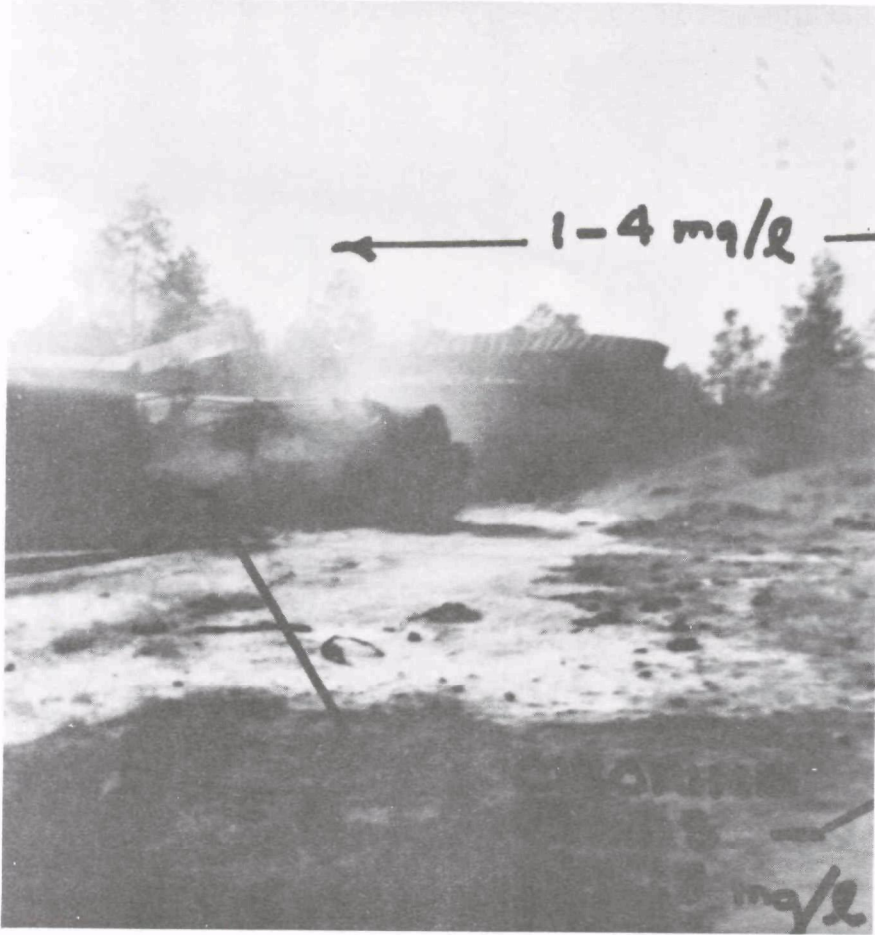
During the night two-to-three inches of rain fell. The caustic solution entered the tributary and elevated the pH from 4.5 to 8.0. The stream was frothy with the material that had been driven through the sandy soil by the increased liquid static head on the buffering ponds. Upon arriving on-scene, the OSC ordered the pits filled in immediately.

At 6:30 a.m., preparations were being made for the final on-scene work. Stream monitoring was to be continued by the state. By then all the wreck had been cleared and track relaid. At 7:30 a.m., a bulldozer operator arrived for the backfilling operations.

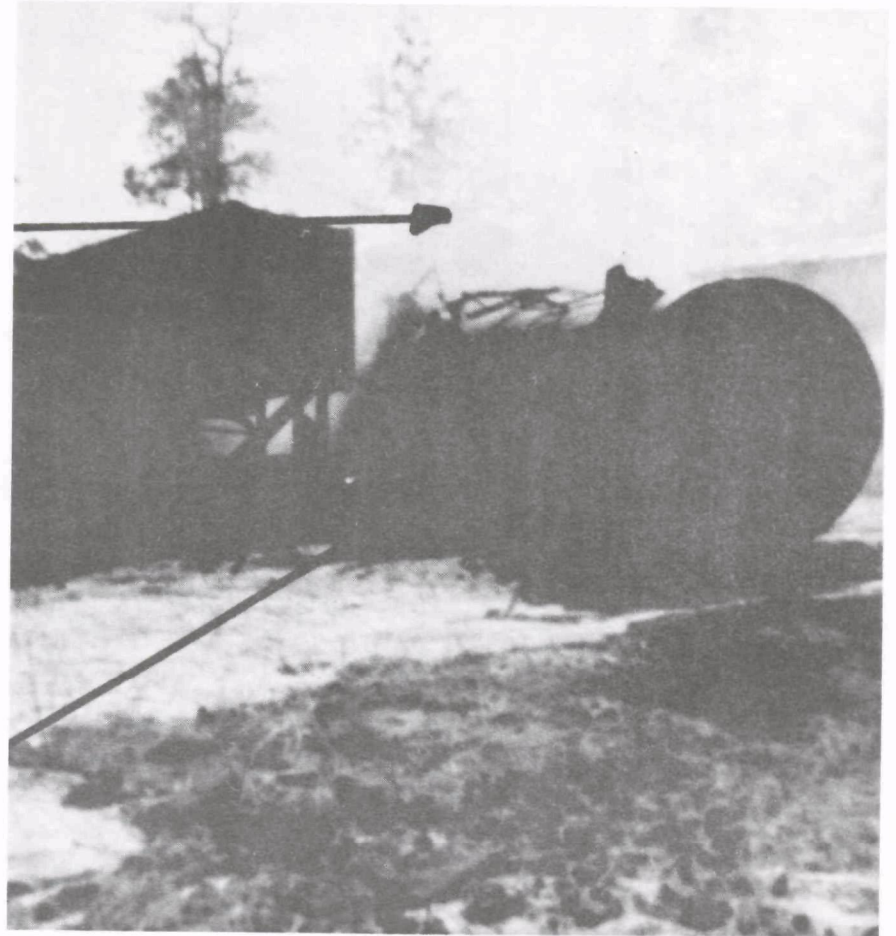
At 4:15 p.m., the liquid propane gas car was off-loaded.

At 5:00 p.m., the OSC left the scene. Jim Littell was to remain and secure all of EPA's business on March 4 and make final inspection of the wreck site.

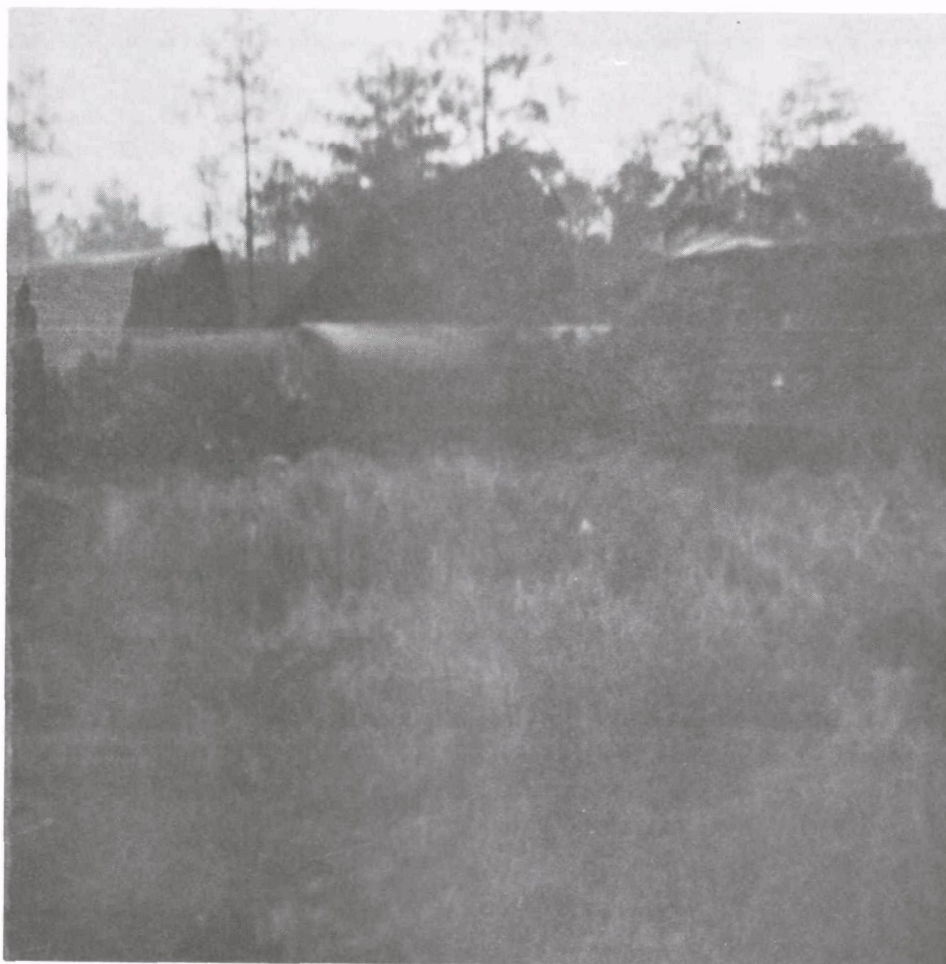
### 3. PHOTOGRAPHS



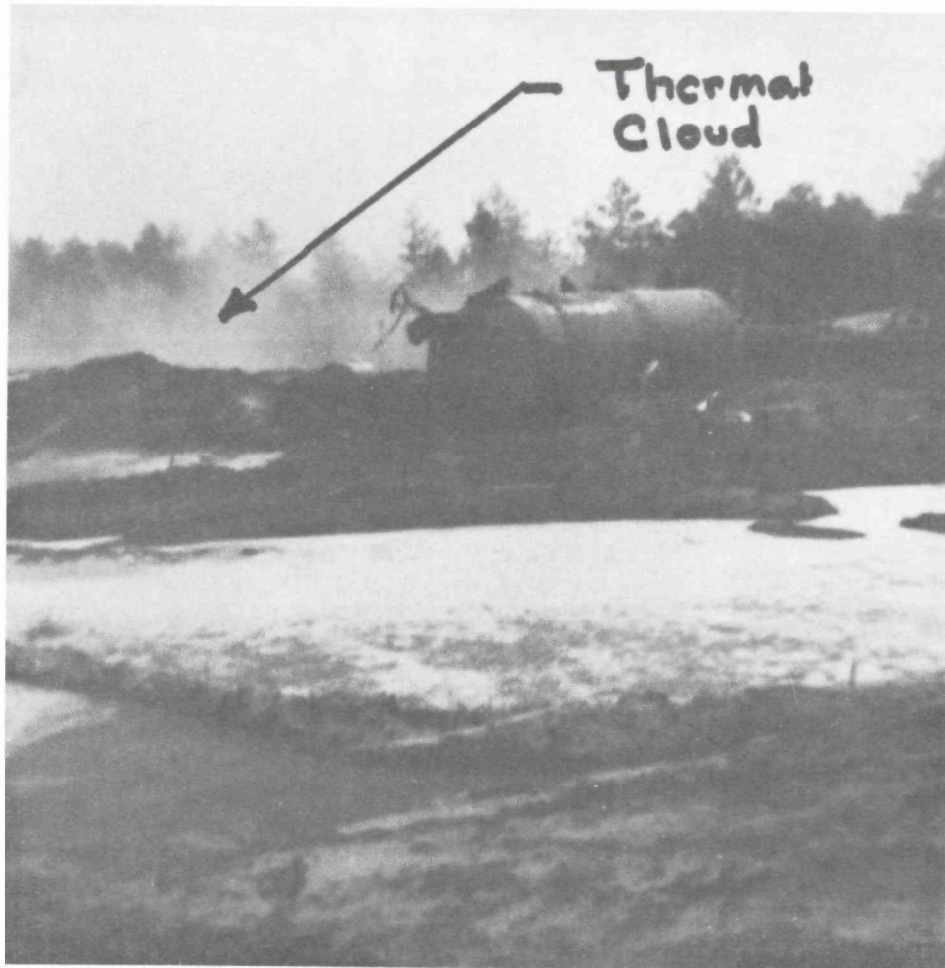
DERAILED CHLORINE CAR



CLOSE-UP SHOWING HIGH-CONCENTRATION EMISSION



SEVEN-CAR PILEUP ON LIQUID PROPANE GAS CAR

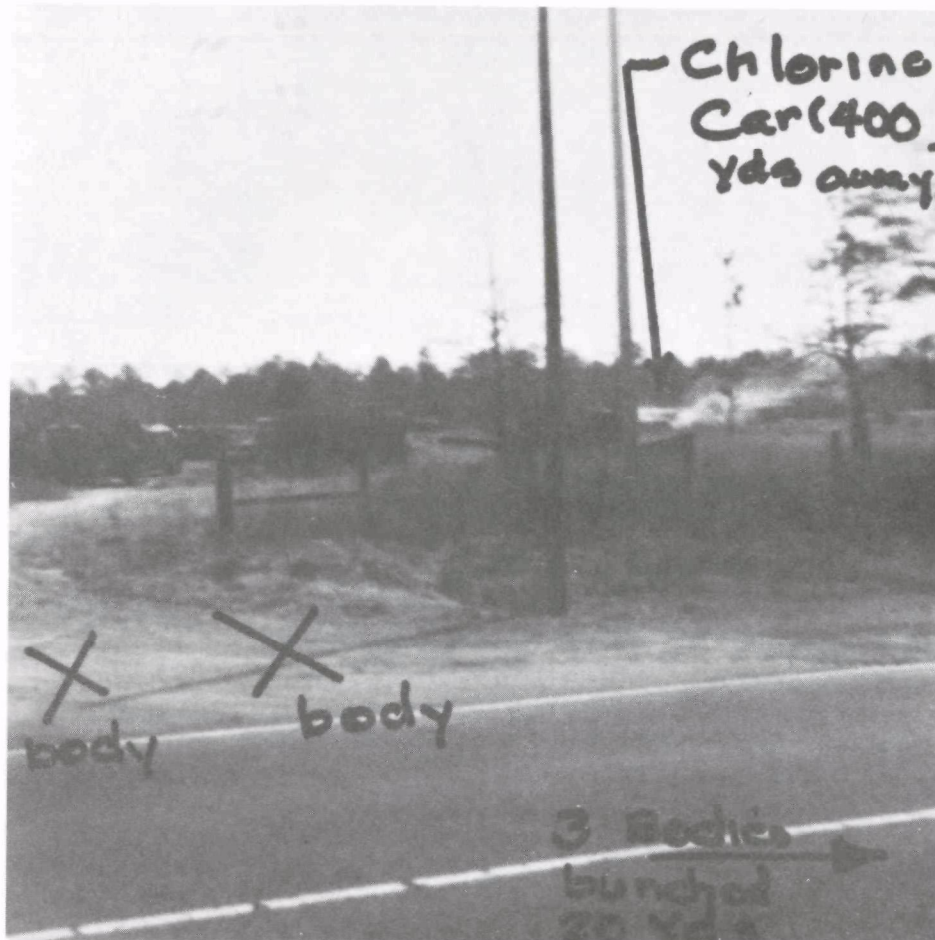


CHLORINE CAR IN OFF-LOADING POSITION  
NEAR CAUSTIC MIXING POND



EIGHTH BODY BEING REMOVED





WRECK SITE FROM U.S. HIGHWAY 231

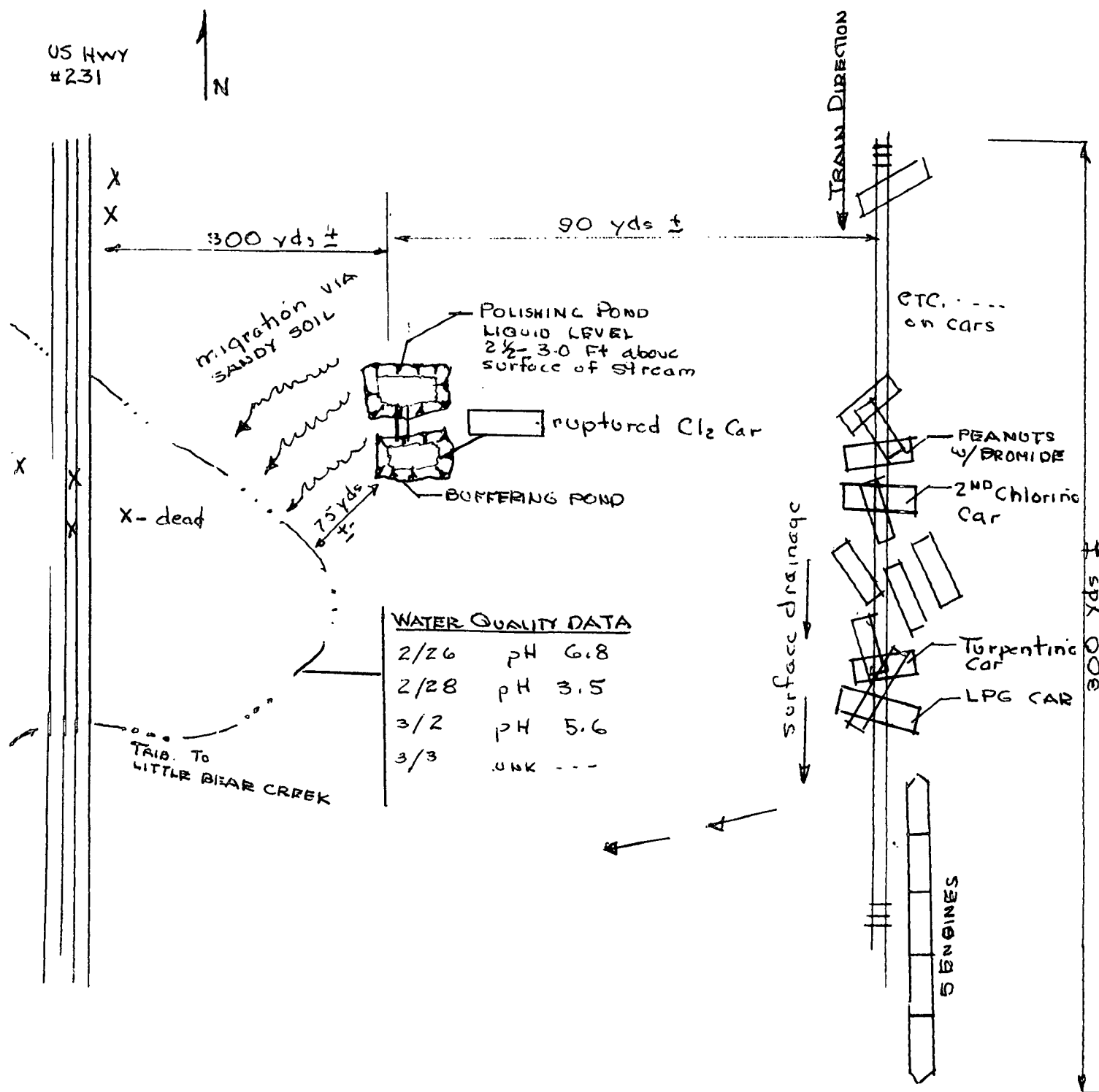


DISTANT VIEW OF WRECK SITE

## 4. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

# WRECK SITE SKETCH

Note: The only liquid spilled that could cause a low pH was chlorine in its liquid form. The only place the chlorine was discharged in liquid form was the buffering pit. That that spilled during the wreck flashed and vaporized.



(NO SCALE)

distances are estimates

*W. J. Smith*

S

Larry Jones

REGION IV SPILL REPORT FORM

☒ REPORTED THRU NRC

RECORDED BY: Rogers

1. ORGANIZATION: NAME Atlanta + St. Andrews Bay Railroad

ST. or BOX 514 E. Main St

CITY Dothan COUNTY STATE Ala.

ZIP PHONE 205 / 292 - 0977

2. SPILL LOCATION: NAME ~~Hay 237~~

STREET 1 1/2 mi. N. of Youngstown, Fla.

CITY Youngstown COUNTY STATE Fla.

3. OCCDA: M/D/Y 2/26/78 TIME 3:00 AM

4. REPDA: M/D/Y 2/26/78 TIME 6:30 AM BY B.D. Christmas

5. POLLUTANT: OIL HAZ MAT SEWAGE

QTYS

QTYE

UNITS

Chlorine Gas

GALS LBS

NaOH

GALS LBS

Ammonium Nitrate

GALS LBS

LPG Tank Car

6. INLAND

WATER TYPE None NAME

7. SOURCE: ONTR Tank Car OFTR

ONNTR OFNTR

8. CAUSE: Casualty - Derailment

9. COMMENTS: Contains 12,000 gals., Leaking, Engineer not accounted for. Evacuating the area. Panama City - 904-785-166. Crew on way with patching equipment. Smith investigating.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

state of Fla.

CG NOTIFIED OTHER AGENCY'S All Emergency Groups

ENFORCEMENT: ☐ NONE ☐ 308

☐ 311(b)5 ☐ 311(b)6

AMOUNT RECOVERED

101 ATLANTA, GA FEBRUARY 27, 1978  
TLX 892427 COAST GUARD WSH  
FOR RELAY TO 8TH CG DISTRICT

SUBJECT : TRAIN DERAILMENT NORTH OF YOUNGSTOWN, FL

TO: KENNETH BIGLANE, DIRECTOR  
OIL & SPECIAL MATERIALS DIV.

FROM: AL SMITH, CHIEF  
ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY BR.

DATE: FEBRUARY 27, 1978

POLREP 1

SITUATION:

1. ON 2/26/78 A TRAIN OWNED BY ATLANTA AND ST. ANDREWS RR DERAILED TWO MILES NORTH OF YOUNGSTOWN, FLORIDA. THE INCIDENT OCCURRED AT 3:15 A.M. OUR OFFICE WAS NOTIFIED AT 6:30 AM BY THE COMPANY.\*
2. 40 CARS WERE DERAILED. THE FOLLOWING CHEMICAL TANK CARS ARE\* INVOLVED IN THE DERAILMENT:
  - A. TWO TANK CARS OF CHLORINE EACH CARRYING 90,000 POUNDS OF \* CHLORINE. ONE TANK CAR IS LEAKING AND ABOUT 60,000 POUNDS HAVE ESCAPED.
  - B. 3 TANK CARS OF SODIUM HYDROXIDE.
  - C. 2 TANK CARS OF AMMONIUM NITRATE.\*
  - D. 1 TANK CAR OF LPG.
  - E. SEVERAL TANK CARS CONTAINING CORROSIVE COMPOUNDS.\*
3. 8 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN KILLED BY THE CHLORINE GAS, 45 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY INJURED, AND 200 PEOPLE HAVE REPORTED TO THE HOSPITAL. 3,000 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN EVACUATED IN A 5-MILE RADIUS AROUND WRECK SITE.
4. AL SMITH IS THE OSC AND HE HAS ACTIVATED THE RRT. 2 CHEMICAL\* TEAMS FROM OLIN MATISON, AND WYANDATE CHEMICAL COMPANY ARE ON-\* SCENE TO ASSIST THE OSC.
5. A TRIBUTARY TO BEARS CREEK RUNS ALONG SIDE TRUCKS\* NEAR WRECK SITE. THIS CREEK FEEDS A RESERVOIR FOR PANAMA CITY'S WATER SUPPLY. RESERVOIR LOCATED ABOUT 13 MILES AWAY FROM \* DERAILMENT.
6. PLANS ARE TO FOAM DOWN CHLORINE TANK CAR, NEUTRALIZE CHLORINE WITH CAUSTIC AND CONTROL DRAINAGE. AL SMITH IS SETTING UP SAMPLING\* PROGRAM AND HAS JIM LYTLE, EPA AIR MONITORING GROUP ON-SCENE TO MONITOR AIR PROBLEM.
7. YESTERDAY AL SMITH HAD A PROBLEM WITH RUSSEL GOBER OF THE \* NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY BOARD WHO TOTALLY IGNORED THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF CIVIL DEFENSE, EPA, AND THE CHEMICAL TEAMS TO STAY OUT OF THE AREA. HE WENT INTO THE AREA AND \* SECURITY BECAME A PROBLEM. THIS RESULTED IN FOUR MORE PEOPLE BEING EXPOSED TO THE CHLORINE GAS AND ADMITTED TO THE HOSPITAL.

WILL REPORT FURTHER.

STONEBRAKER  
ENDIT

STONEBRAKER EPA

EPA SPILLS WSH

01 ATLANTA, GA FEBRUARY 28, 1978  
TLX 892427 COAST GUARD WSH  
FOR RELAY TO 8TH CG DISTRICT

DATE: FEBRUARY 28, 1978

SUBJECT: TRAIN DERAILMENT YOUNGSTOWN, FL INVOLVING CHLORINE  
TANK CARS.

TO: KEN BIGLANE, DIRECTOR  
OIL AND SPECIAL MATERIALS DIV..

FROM AL SMITH, CHIEF  
ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY BR.

POLREP 2

SITUATION:

1. AL SMITH REPORTS THAT THE DAMAGED TANK CAR CONTAINING ABOUT \*  
30,000 POUNDS OF CHLORINE WILL BE MOVED TO A LARGE TRENCH. THE \*  
TRENCH CONTAINS A CAUSTIC SOLUTION THAT WILL HOPEFULLY NEUTRALIZE\*  
THE CHLORINE. THE OPERATION BEGAN AT 9:30 AM AND SHOULD BE COM-  
PLETED BY 1:00 PM
2. 500 MORE PEOPLE MAKING A TOTAL OF 3500 PEOPLE HAVE BEEN  
EVACUATED DURING THIS CRITICAL TIME PERIOD.\*
3. PLANS ARE TO START WORK ON THE TANK CAR OF LPG AFTER THE  
CHLORINE TANK CAR IS NEUTRALIZED. THE EVACUATION WILL REMAIN IN\*  
EFFECT UNTIL LPG TANK CAR IS REMOVED.
4. DIKES HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTED AROUND THE WRECK SITE TO CONTROL\*  
THE DAMAGE. IT IS RAINING NOW BUT DIKES ARE HOLDING.
5. SMITH HAS SET UP A WATER SAMPLING PROGRAM. SAMPLES ARE BEING  
ANALYZED IN THE FLORIDA STATE LABORATORIES. THE WATER SUPPLY \*  
FOR PANAMA CITY HAS NOT BEEN AFFECTED AT THIS TIME.
6. JIM LYTLE, EPA, CONTINUES TO MONITOR AIR PROBLEM.
7. WILL REPORT FURTHER.

SMITH  
ENDIT

AL J. SMITH EPA  
TWX 8107518145

EPA SPILLS WSH

01 ATLANTA, GA MARCH 1, 1978  
TLX 892427 COAST GUARD WSH  
FOR RELAY TO 8TH COAST GUARD DISTRICT

SUBJECT: TRAIN DERAILMENT YOUNGSTOWN, FL INVOLVING CHLORINE  
TANK CARS.

TO: KEN BIGLANE, DIRECTOR  
OIL & SPECIAL MATERIALS DIV.

FROM: R.D. STONEBRAKER, DEPUTY CHIEF  
ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY BR.

POLREP 3

SITUATION:

1. SMITH REPORTS THAT DAMAGED TANK CAR HAS BEEN MOVED TO A HOLDING POND CONTAINING CAUSTIC SOLUTION. CHLORINE IS BEING RELEASED THROUGH A VALVE AND NEUTRALIZED IN POND. ABOUT 85% OF CHLORINE HAS BEEN NEUTRALIZED.
2. LPG TANK CAR IS BURIED UNDER OTHER DERAILED CARS. THE WRECKAGE IS BEING REMOVED TO GET TO LPG CAR. EQUIPMENT IS STANDING \* BY TO EMPTY THIS TANK CAR.
3. CIVIL DEFENSE WITH EPA CONCURRENCE IS ALLOWING PEOPLE TO RETURN TO THEIR HOMES AS LONG AS THEY ARE ESCORTED BY POLICE. THEY ARE IN RADIO CONTACT WITH COMMAND POST. PEOPLE WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO ENTER THEIR HOMES IN A 2 MILE RADIUS UNTIL LPG TANK CAR IS EMPTIED.
4. WATER SAMPLE DATA INDICATES THAT SPILLED MATERIAL HAS NOT ENTERED THE STREAM. PANAMA CITY WATER SUPPLY HAS NOT BEEN AFFECTED.
5. WEATHER CONDITIONS - ZERO WIND HEAVY DEW AND RAIN.
6. WILL REPORT FURTHER.

\*  
STONEBRAKER  
ENDIT

R.D. STONEBRAKER EPA REGION IV  
8107518145



EPA SPILLS WSH

EPA ATL

DATE: MARCH 1, 1978

SUBJECT: PROBLEMS WITH NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION AND SAFETY BOARD\*  
AT YOUNGSTOWN, FL, CONCERNING TRAIN DERAILMENT.

TO: KEN BIGLANE, DIRECTOR  
OIL & SPECIAL MATERIALS DIV.

FROM: AL SMITH, CHIEF  
ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY BR.

PERSONNEL FROM NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION & SAFETY BOARD ARE STILL  
MAKING TECHNICAL OBSERVATIONS TO THE PRESS CONCERNING CLEANUP  
AND SEQUENCE OF EVENTS THAT ARE BEING PERFORMED OR NOT BEING PER-  
FORMED.

AS A RESULT PRESS COMES TO ME AS THE OSC AND QUESTIONS WHY CERTAIN\*  
ALTERNATIVES, AS SUGGESTED BY THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION & SAFETY\*  
BOARD, WERE NOT CONSIDERED.

THESE SAME PEOPLE HAVE NOT ACKNOWLEDGED MY PRESENCE SINCE \*  
SUNDAY 2/26/78. YET THEY POSE THESE QUESTIONS ABOUT CLEANUP  
AT THEIR DAILY NEWS CONFERENCE AT 10:00 PM.

THEY HAVE INVESTIGATED THE ACCIDENT. NOW THEY ARE CREATING  
ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS FOR THE OSC. JUST WHAT IS THEIR ROLE AND\*  
WHEN DOES IT END?

SMITH  
ENDIT

EPA SPILLS WSH

01 ATLANTA, GA MARCH 3, 1978  
TLX 892427 COAST GUARD WSH  
FOR RELAY TO 8TH COAST GUARD DISTRICT

EPA ATL

SUBJECT: TRAIN DERAILMENT NORTH OF YOUNGSTOWN, FL

FROM: R.D. STONEBRAKER, DEPUTY CHIEF  
ENVIRONMENTAL EMERGENCY BR.

TO: KEN BIGLANE, DIRECTOR  
OIL & SPECIAL MATERIALS DIV.

SITUATION:

1. SMITH REPORTS THAT CHLORINE IN DAMAGED TANK CAR HAS BEEN NEUTRALIZED IN THE PONDS OF CAUSTIC SOLUTION.
  2. ALL OF THE WRECKAGE HAS BEEN CLEARED. THE ONLY REMAINING\* TANK CAR IS THE ONE CONTAINING LPG. PLANS ARE TO TRANSFER LPG\* TO ANOTHER RAILROAD TANK CAR.
  3. EVACUATION REMAINS IN EFFECT UNTIL LPG IS TRANSFERRED.
  4. LATE YESTERDAY 3/2/78, SMITH TOLD THE RAILROAD OFFICIALS \* TO COVER THE TWO PONDS CONTAINING THE CAUSTIC SOLUTION. HE DIDN'T WANT THIS MATERIAL TO ESCAPE THE AREA AND ENTER THE TRIBUTARY TO LITTLE BEAR'S CREEK.
- RAILROAD OFFICIALS CHECKED WITH TEAM FROM WYANDATTE CHEMICAL CO WHO ADVISED THEM NOT TO COVER THE PONDS. INSTEAD THEY PUMPED ADDITIONAL CAUSTIC INTO PONDS.
5. LAST NIGHT THEY HAD A 2-INCH RAIN IN THE AREA. THE CAUSTIC SOLUTION ENTERED THE TRIBUTARY AND ELEVATED PH TO 8.0 FROM A PH OF 4.5.
  - \* 6. THIS WOULD HAVE NEVER HAPPENED IF THEY HAD COVERED THE PONDS EARLIER. SMITH HAS DEMANDED THAT PONDS BE FILLED IN IMMEDIATELY. THIS IS BEING DONE.
  7. WILL REPORT FURTHER.

STONEBRAKER  
ENDIT

R.D. STONEBRAKER EPA ATL  
#107514145

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

DATE: June 26, 1978

SUBJECT: Youngstown, Florida Revisited Five Months After the Tragedy

FROM: Al Smith 

THRU: Mr. Traina

TO: Files

On June 13, 1978, I revisited the Youngstown derailment site and took the attached pictures. It should be noted for record that the original chlorine ponds that were of such concern during the accident are now represented on-scene by a large mound of earth perhaps 100 feet, about 50 feet, and 7 or 8 in total overall above ground elevation. The area has been fenced and warning signs are posted that trespassers will be prosecuted.

During my visit there, one of the sherrif's deputies stopped while I was taking pictures to see what I was doing there. So with this kind of interest in the site, in my estimation, there should be no harm to the public of an environmental nature. After January 79 there should be no fear of ever having any consequences from drilling water wells or growing gardens, etc. in the area. None of the train derailment other than the chlorine car and the LP gas cars and the cars that were able to be moved, have been removed from the scene. There are a number of wrecked cars stilled lying scattered all about in their original wrecked position.

While I was in Panama City, there was an editorial on Channel 4 television bemoaning the fact that this monument to the horrible tragedy was still there and questioning could be done about it. The editorial contended that the railroad position in not removing the wrecked cars was a legal matter. I am not exactly sure that within all of our regulatory authority that we have the right to go in and move those cars. Certainly the urgency of need is not there at this time. All the cars are empty and the area is quarantined. Vandalism even poses no problem other than some possible liability to the railroad for physical injuries on scene. Environmentally the area is secure.

RECEIVED  
EPA/REGION IV  
JUN 26 4 25 PM '78  
ENFORCEMENT  
DIVISION

