

Follow Up Report: #19-405

September 28th, 2019 – Copper Sulphate powder spilled

The following information relates to spill 2019-405 reported by Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. September 29th 2019, and is being provided in accordance with:

- the Nunavut Water Board License 2AM-MEL1631 Water Licence, part H, item 8c and;
- subsection 38(7) of the Fisheries Act

Description of Incident

At 11:00a.m. on Saturday September 28th, we received a verbal report of a potential spill of an unknown blue powder outside of some sea-cans near the Mill (Figure 1-4). Further investigation revealed that this was Copper Sulphate (aka Cupric Sulfate, CuSO_4 UN3077).

An operator was unloading the sea-can containing pallets of the CuSO_4 and noticed one of the bags was torn.

The nearest natural water body (G2), 475m to the north, was not impacted. The spill occurred at 63° 2'16.83"N, 92°13'35.50"W, within the Meliadine managed water catchment.



Figure 1: Area outside the container which was contaminated.



Figure 2: Forklift operators removing the torn bag/pallet to bring inside the Mill.



Figure 3: Damaged pallet which has been patched so that no more material is released during transport.



Figure 4: View from inside the container after the pallets were removed. Most of the material was contained inside the sea-can.



Figure 5: Location of Copper Sulphate spill within Meliadine's managed catchment area.

Spill Response & Cleanup

The torn bag of CuSO_4 was patched and removed from the sea-can. The sea-can was unloaded and the pallets were brought inside the Mill. The spilled material in the sea-can was shoveled into buckets and replaced into the original bag. The material outside the sea-can was scraped up and brought to the Mill to be disposed of within the process plant. Figure 6 shows the cleaned up area where the spill had occurred.



Figure 6: Affected area after clean-up was completed.

Cause of Incident and Corrective Measures

The bag containing CuSO_4 was ripped, which likely occurred during transport. The day they were unloading this sea-can we experienced very high winds (gusting up to 80km/hr). The wind blew a significant amount of the material out of the sea-can. In these situations, the operators should try to remove as much material as they can from the pallets before removing the pallets from the container, so that it does not fall onto the ground. Inspection of each of the bags of material before handling them with the machinery should also be implemented in order to avoid removing an already damaged bag before it can be patched.