

N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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DENR WILL ALLOW CLEANUP TO RESUME AT SITE OF APEX FIRE

RALEIGH — The N.C. Division of Waste Management has allowed cleanup to resume at the site in Apex where a hazardous waste storage facility caught fire Oct. 5.

DWM ordered Environmental Quality to resume cleanup of the site, following suspension yesterday of cleanup operations after a fire started in a 55-gallon drum of sodium at the site.

The Division of Waste Management allowed cleanup to resume after Environmental Quality provided the state agency a written description of the event and assurances that steps taken were consistent with the original cleanup plan, in order to protect public health and safety when cleanup continued.

After Wednesday's fire, Environmental Quality submitted to DWM an initial incident report. DWM then submitted to Environmental Quality a series of questions concerning safety, the company's response to the incident and the procedures outlined in the original state-approved cleanup plan.

EQ responded to all questions asked by the Division of Waste Management and has executed a memorandum of understanding relating to emergency response procedures at Environmental Quality. This MOU represents an agreement between Environmental Quality (EQ) and the Apex Fire Department.

The MOU will allow, in any future incident, more immediate implementation of steps by EQ's contractor to respond to any incidents and ensure clearer coordination with the Apex Fire Department.

"Remediation is managed in the safest manner possible to prevent incidents like yesterday," said DWM Director Dexter Matthews. "But you plan for incidents so that your response protects public health and the environment."

With all questions asked by DWM satisfactorily answered by EQ, and the above-mentioned agreement reached, DWM has granted EQ permission to resume cleanup activities.

To view the cleanup plan, please visit <http://www.enr.state.nc.us/html/eqfinalcleanupplan.html>.

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