The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

State of Emergency Declared in Udmurtia After Chemical Spill

March 21, 2012



A state of emergency has been declared in Udmurtia following a chemical spill at a disused asphalt factory.

Ildar Bikbulatov, deputy head of the regional administration, told journalists Wednesday that a clean up operation would get underway Thursday.

"The substance is localized, it is not spreading. There is no threat to residents of Balezino," he said, the BBC Russian service reported.

The local emergency situations ministry estimates there is over 160 tons of carbon tetrachloride in a disused bitumen pit at the plant near the village of Balezino.

Carbon tetrachloride is a colorless liquid used widely used in the chemical industry. Exposure to vapor can lead to liver damage and cause cancer.

The decision follows a series of protests in the area since local media first reported illegal dumping on March 14.

Local news site Dayudm.ru, reported Wednesday that residents frustrated with the local authorities' foot-dragging gathered 2,000 signatures for a direct appeal to President Dmitry Medvedev to intervene.

Bikbulatov said the waste would be loaded into special containers and sent to a specialized storage facility, likely to be in the Leningrad region.

The operation is being funded by Khimprom, a chemical factory in the Chuvash republic city of Novocheboksarsk where the waste is believed to have originated, he said.

Local representatives of the Federal Inspection Service for Natural Resources Use (Rosprirodnadzor) said the carbon tetrachloride was dumped in a disused bitumen pit at the plant in late December, RIA-Novosti reported Monday.

An investigation had linked the dumping to six rail wagon loads of the substance belonging to Khimprom, a subsidiary of Renova Orgsintez, part of billionaire Viktor Vekselberg's Renova group.

The dumping operation was premeditated and "seriously thought-out," said Vladimir Grigoryev, the head of the watchdog in Udmurtia, who added that three of the railway wagons loaded with the substance were unloaded at Balezino.

Two were unloaded in Izhevsk onto a Tatarstan-registered vehicle that was last seen heading into that republic's Nizhnekamsky district, while the third was returned to Khimprom, Grigoryev said.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2012/03/21/state-of-emergency-declared-in-udmurtia-after-chemical-spill-a13442