

Nearly three months after massive fire, cleanup starts at Nox-Crete site

Nancy Gaarder, *Omaha World-Herald*, Aug 23, 2022

Nearly three months after a massive chemical fire, the charred remains of a warehouse southwest of downtown Omaha are being cleared away for disposal.

Cleanup of the Nox-Crete fire site began Tuesday and is expected to take three to four weeks, said Ann Pedersen, who is handling news media inquiries for the company.

The warehouse near 20th Street and Woolworth Avenue caught fire May 30. The fire released a noxious cloud over the neighborhood.

Some area residents remain frustrated by a lack of information about the incident.

“I’m glad they’re finally getting it cleaned up, but I’m really still frustrated that we’re not getting a lot of information,” Jodi Hillhouse said. “I’m hoping that one of reasons it’s taken three months is that they were doing a proper investigation. I don’t know, though, because we’re not getting a lot of information.”



Heavy machinery piles debris at Nox-Crete on Tuesday. The warehouse near 20th Street and Woolworth Avenue caught fire May 30. CHRIS MACHIAN photos, THE WORLD-HERALD

According to correspondence between the company’s representatives and state environmental regulators, some of the delays have related to an insurance investigation and settlement.

On several occasions, the state has prodded the company, encouraging it to plan ahead so that cleanup wouldn’t be delayed, according to documents on file with the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy.

The Paul Davis company has been retained by Nox-Crete as the general contractor for the cleanup. The Davis company has in turn subcontracted with Peitzmeier Demolition of Omaha to do the building and debris removal.

B2 Environmental has been retained to handle the environmental aspect of the cleanup, including determining what types of hazardous materials might remain on-site and how to dispose of it.



Heavy machinery piles debris as cleanup began at the Nox-Crete building on Tuesday. The building was destroyed in a three-alarm fire on May 30 that led to a voluntary evacuation of the neighborhood. CHRIS MACHIAN, THE WORLD-HERALD

Roofing materials, insulation, petroleum-contaminated debris and soil will be taken to an area landfill.

Metal and plastic will be taken to a recycler.

Any drums or other containers that are discovered during cleanup will be tested to determine proper disposal, according to documents on file with the state.



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Cleanup will include removing the concrete pad on which the building sat. Nox-Crete has retained Terracon consulting engineers to test property near its warehouse for possible contamination.

Owen Lasswell of NDEE said the state will conduct regular site visits to make sure the cleanup follows state regulations regarding waste disposal.