

EPA Begins Time-Critical Removal Action at Cosmo Specialty Fibers

August 2026

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in coordination with the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology), has begun a time-critical chemical removal action at the dormant Cosmo Specialty Fibers pulp mill in Cosmopolis, Washington.

Background

Since 2024, EPA and Ecology have worked closely together to assess conditions at the non-operational facility and identify actions needed to reduce potential risks to the community and the environment.

In April 2026, Ecology, the long-term lead agency for the site, requested EPA assistance with the removal of the remaining chemicals in tanks and containers. More than 750,000 gallons of waste chemicals remain at the site.



Aerial view of Cosmo Specialty Fibers. Photo Source: EPA

The facility owner was required to submit an EPA-approved work plan by late June and begin conducting the chemical removal under EPA oversight by mid-July. Because these required milestones were not met, EPA has mobilized to the facility and will complete the removal effort.

Next Steps

For the next several months, EPA crews will remove and safely transport chemicals from the storage tanks.

- EPA will treat the bulk of the acidic material onsite by neutralizing it with a basic liquid.
- This neutralization step may generate some sulfur dioxide, which is a hazardous gas.
 - It is important to know that sulfur dioxide has an odor but smelling it does not necessarily mean there is a hazardous exposure.
 - EPA will actively monitor the concentrations of the gas, making sure it does not present a threat to the community.
- Once the chemicals are removed, the tanks will remain on site. EPA does not plan on deconstructing the plant infrastructure unless it is necessary to remove the hazardous chemicals.

Community members can expect to see an increased presence of personnel, contractors, and equipment at the facility throughout the duration of the project. To ensure the security of the site, EPA will maintain 24-hour security while removal operations are underway.

At this time, there is no immediate threat to the public outside of the facility. Known chemical releases at the facility are being contained on site. The removal action is a proactive measure intended to safely eliminate potential environmental hazards and reduce future risk to the surrounding community. EPA expects time Time-Critical Removal Action to be completed by the end of the year.

EPA will post project updates periodically at response.epa.gov/CosmoTCRA.



Air monitoring equipment setup at site perimeter
Photo Source: EPA

For More Information

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