On April 12, 1984, a pipe nipple in a scrubbing solution storage tank failed, allowing 1500 gallons of 12% sodium hydroxide (NaOH) solution to be discharged on the ground. The spill was contained within company property and contaminated approximately 1500 ft² of soil. Surface samples of the soil were taken and analyzed, showing 2 to 3% alkalinity via HCl titration to a pH of 7.0. Approximately 80% of this was sodium hydroxide at the time of analysis, the remainder being naturally converted to sodium carbonate by CO₂ absorption from the air.

The subject storage tank was suitable for this application, however, previous users had replaced a pipe nipple with aluminum which was not observed prior to use. Aluminum is not compatible with caustic, causing the nipple to corrode through and a leak to develop. Operation of the facility was suspended until repairs and any necessary modifications are made.

Shortly after the spill was observed, the responsible ESG environmental control specialist was notified. He then contacted the required governmental agencies for reportable spills. Cleanup of the contaminated area has begun with approximately 6000 pounds of soil being removed to date.