



SOUTH BAY ASBESTOS SUPERFUND SITE

U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY \$ REGION 9 \$ SAN FRANCISCO, CA \$ JULY 2007

EPA WILL CONDUCT ADDITIONAL ASBESTOS SAMPLING

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that additional asbestos sampling needs to be conducted at the South Bay Asbestos (SBA) Superfund Site in Alviso, San Jose, California. This sampling will address whether or not the asbestos cleanup level (previously based on one percent or less asbestos in soil) is sufficiently protective for the SBA site. This issue was identified during the Five-Year Review conducted in 2005. EPA will be conducting activity-based air sampling at several different locations at the site to evaluate if there is any potential for significant exposure to asbestos in Alviso during normal dust-generating activities.

Why are we doing this sampling?

EPA completed the Second Five-Year Review Report for the SBA site in September 2005. A fact sheet summarizing the findings was issued to the community in December 2005. EPA found that cleanup actions at the SBA site are currently protective of human health and the environment because the major sources of asbestos exposure are being controlled (via landfill covers) or have been removed (via truck yards and ring levee). However, because of the new understanding of the potential for the release of asbestos fibers from soil into the air, EPA deferred the final protectiveness statement for this site until the asbestos site data could be re-evaluated.



Figure 1: Technician in personal protective equipment collecting samples

Open House

Wednesday, August 8, 2007
5:30 pm- 7:30 pm

**Alviso Branch Library
Community Room**
5050 North First St.
San José, CA 95002

U.S. EPA staff will provide information and be available to answer your questions regarding the plans for additional asbestos sampling.

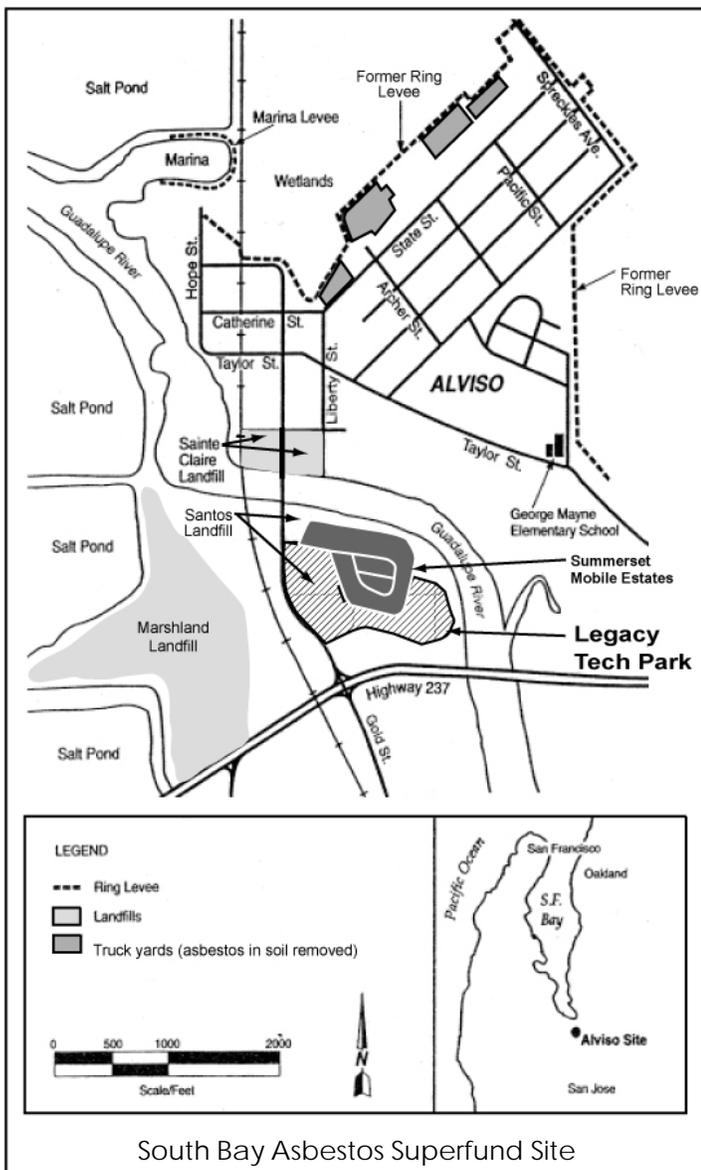
A Five-Year Review and What it Means

Under the Superfund program, cleanup actions are reviewed every five years. The purpose of the Five-Year Review is to make sure the cleanup continues to protect human health and the environment. The Five-Year Review also identifies site issues and recommendations and includes a statement of protectiveness. A protectiveness statement explains whether the cleanup continues to be effective and what other measures may still be needed at the site.

EPA has used the standard of one percent asbestos in soil as the cleanup action level at the SBA. This assumes that dust-generating activities at soils below this level would not release significant amounts of asbestos into the air. EPA is undertaking the current action because recent information has shown that soil-based sampling can underestimate the exposure to individuals engaged in activities that disturb asbestos-containing soil materials. Based on the evaluation of previous SBA sampling data and site conditions, EPA will conduct additional sampling in specific locations to evaluate if community members may be experiencing significant exposure to airborne asbestos during dust-generating activities.

What is NOA and why is EPA concerned?

Naturally occurring asbestos (NOA) occurs in rock and soil as the result of natural geologic processes, often near earthquake faults as in San Jose and other areas of California. Most of the NOA in Alviso was brought in with soil from the surrounding areas of San Jose to be used as fill material to raise the elevation of properties that were originally in low-lying areas subject to flooding. Disturbance of NOA, through construction, recreation activities or vehicular traffic, can raise dust and release fibers into the air. Asbestos is a known human carcinogen. When people inhale too many asbestos fibers over a long period of time, their health may be at risk.



How will EPA measure exposure to asbestos?

Air samples will be taken in the breathing zone of EPA technicians while simulating soil-disturbing activities that might cause exposure to asbestos fibers like driving a vehicle, riding a bike, or running on a field. This is called “activity-based sampling” (ABS) and is considered a more representative method of measuring personal exposure to airborne asbestos.

EPA technicians will be wearing white protective clothing and respirators as a precaution (see Figure 1 and 2.) Because these technicians work with hazardous materials routinely, federal health and safety rules require them to use this protective gear. Sampling devices will be connected to the breathing space of the person wearing the respirators to collect air samples. Workers may be riding bicycles or all-terrain vehicles during testing to simulate activities that disturb the soil.

In addition, stationary air monitors will be set up next to the ABS sampling locations to measure localized ambient asbestos levels and help pinpoint sources. Stationary monitors will also be used to measure ambient asbestos concentrations in “background” locations that are far enough away not to be influenced by activities within town.

EPA will then have the samples analyzed for asbestos fibers in a laboratory and conduct an exposure assessment by comparing the results of the personal ABS samples to the stationary ambient samples.

When and where will the sampling occur?

Sampling will occur during the week of August 20-25, 2007 during daytime hours.

Sampling will occur at different locations at the SBA Superfund site:

- 1) Any unpaved truck yards where there is significant vehicular traffic
- 2) State Street and the majority of other community streets north of the Guadalupe River.
- 3) The sports field behind George Mayne Elementary School

What happens next?

EPA will be holding an Open House on August 8 from 5:30-7:30pm at the Alviso Branch of the San Jose Public Library (details on page 1). U.S. EPA staff will be there to answer questions and will have additional materials available.

EPA will report the sampling results in a fact sheet and on our web site later this year. EPA will evaluate the results of the sampling to determine if there is a significant exposure to asbestos in the community. We will continue to inform the Alviso community of our progress in these areas and if further response action is necessary.

Web Page

Information about the site is available on USEPA's webpage at:

<http://www.epa.gov/region09/southbayasbestos>



Figure 2: Technician in personal protective equipment collecting samples while riding on an all-terrain vehicle (ATV)

Information Repositories

Two information repositories hold the Second Five-Year Review Report for the South Bay Asbestos Site as well as other documents related to the investigation and cleanup of this Superfund site:

San Jose Public Library

Alviso Branch,
5050 N. First St.
Alviso, CA 95002
(408) 263-3626
Email: al.sjpl@sjlibrary.org

Mon 2PM - 7PM
Tues - Wed 11AM - 8PM
Thurs - Sat 10AM - 6PM

Superfund Records Center

95 Hawthorne St, Room 403
San Francisco, CA 94105
(415) 536-2000

Mon - Fri 8AM - 5PM.



EPA Will Conduct Additional Asbestos Sampling at the South Bay Asbestos Superfund Site

How to Contact Us

If you have questions or concerns about the South Bay Asbestos site, please contact any of the EPA staff listed below

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