



# South Bay Asbestos Superfund Site.

United States Environmental Protection Agency • Region 9 • San Francisco, CA

December 2005

## Five-Year Review Completed.

*The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has completed its Second Five-Year Review Report for the South Bay Asbestos (SBA) Superfund Site in Alviso, San Jose, California. EPA has found that clean up actions at the SBA site are currently protective of human health and the environment because the major sources of asbestos exposure have been removed or are being controlled. This fact sheet summarizes the findings of the Second Five-Year Review Report.*

### A FIVE-YEAR REVIEW AND WHAT IT MEANS.

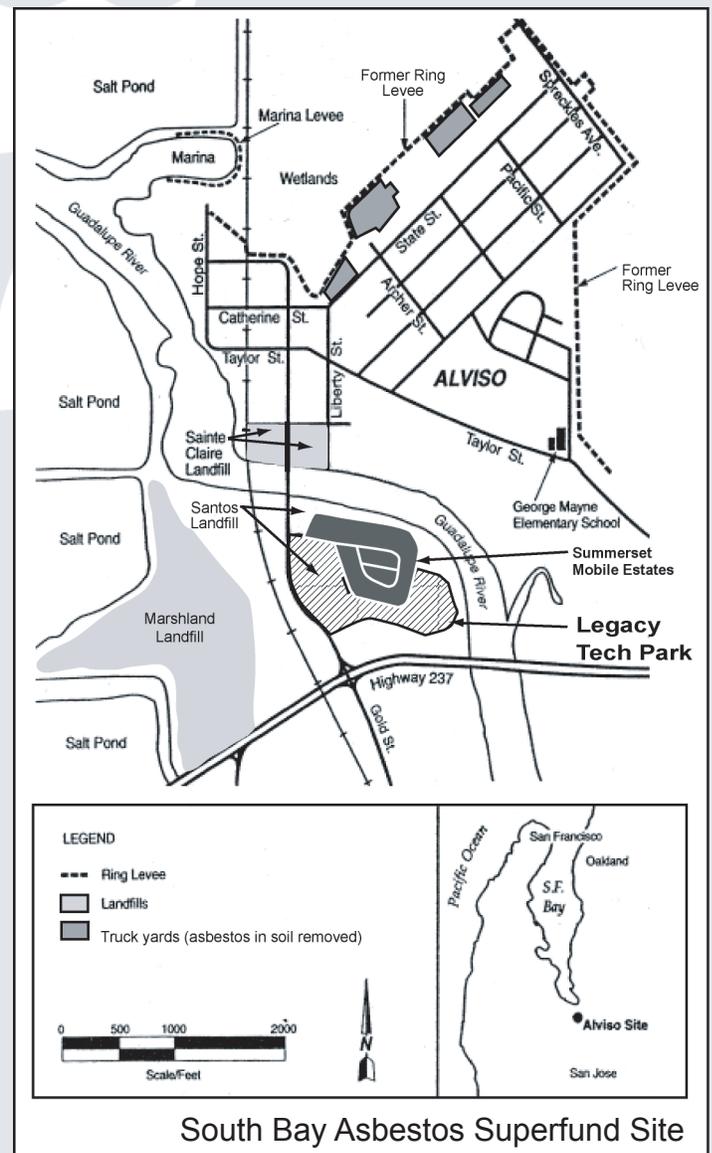
According to Superfund law, if a cleanup leaves contaminants at a Superfund site above levels that allow for unrestricted use, the cleanup will be reviewed every five years. The purpose of the Five-Year Review is to make sure the cleanup continues to protect human health and the environment. During the review, EPA studies information about the site and conducts a site inspection and community interviews.

The report includes the following:

- Site background and history,
- Cleanup actions taken and control measures in place at the site,
- Progress since the last review,
- An explanation of documents and laws reviewed,
- A summary of the site inspection and community interviews conducted,
- A technical assessment of site conditions.

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.

The Second Five-Year Review of the SBA Site was completed in September 2005. The next five-year review for this site will be performed in 2010.



Printed on Recycled Paper

## SUMMARY OF SECOND FIVE-YEAR REVIEW FINDINGS.

The South Bay Asbestos Superfund site consists of two operable units (OUs):

1. The Ring Levee (OU-1).
2. The Overall Site (OU-2), which includes the truck yards and landfills.

Asbestos-containing soil material (ACSM) and buried asbestos-containing waste are the problems at the site. Soil-disturbing activities, such as excavation or truck traffic, can cause asbestos fibers to be released into the air. Asbestos can cause lung disease when asbestos fibers are present in the air we breathe. EPA has used one percent asbestos in soil as the action level for cleanup.

### Cleanup Activities at SBA.

The cleanup objective of the SBA Superfund Site is to minimize exposure to asbestos for humans and the environment by controlling the release of asbestos fibers into the air. EPA has completed a number of measures for meeting its objective, as described in this section.

#### *Removal of the Ring Levee.*

To meet this objective at OU-1, the Ring Levee which was built with ACSM from a local quarry was removed in 1993. It was originally built to control floodwater and extended for almost two miles around Alviso. It was replaced by a temporary ring levee, which was constructed with clean soil. This temporary levee was also removed in 1996 since it was no longer needed after completion of the Coyote Creek Flood Control Project. In order to restore and replace wetlands lost as a result of construction of the Alviso Ring Levee, the Wetlands Restoration Project began in 1996 and was complete in 2003.

#### *Paving and Soil Removal at Truck Yards.*

Cleanup actions at OU-2, the Overall Site, involved several areas. Four truck yard areas north of State Street were required to pave their property in 1992 since they had greater than one percent asbestos in the soil and significant truck traffic. This was done to control the release of asbestos fibers into the air. In order to eliminate the need for long-term

maintenance of the paved cap, the ACSM was removed from three of the truck yards in 1998 and from the fourth in 2004.

#### *Capping of Landfills.*

Three former landfill areas (Santos, Marshland and Sainte Claire) in Alviso have asbestos-containing cement pipe buried on their property. These landfills on the SBA site are required to be covered or “capped” to prevent the release of asbestos into the air. Based on asbestos soil sampling, EPA has determined that all three of the landfill properties have adequate caps, having either two feet of clean soil cover or a paved surface.

To ensure that these caps are maintained, long term controls must be in place. The Marshland Landfill has adequate controls in place under the state landfill closure regulations. The Legacy Tech Park portion of the Santos Landfill has a deed restriction in place which ensures the cap will be maintained. The Summerset Mobile Estates portion of the Santos Landfill and the Sainte Claire Landfill both require that long-term controls be verified as adequate under existing state landfill closure regulations or a deed restriction will be needed.

#### *Restoration of Environmental Education Center.*

One other cleanup action was taken at the Environmental Education Center (EEC), which is located in the San Francisco Wildlife Refuge. In a joint project between EPA and the City of San Jose in 2004, over 2,500 cubic yards of ACSM were removed, transported, and properly disposed. The EEC site was fully restored and excavated areas were backfilled with clean soil.

### WHAT IS ASBESTOS?

Asbestos is a natural mineral made of strong, very fine fibers. When asbestos is in the air we breathe, it can be a significant health threat and may cause lung cancer. In the past, asbestos was added to a variety of products to strengthen them, and to provide heat insulation and fire resistance. EPA has banned or severely restricted its use in manufacturing and construction.

## **SBA Site Inspection.**

EPA representatives conducted site inspections in June and July 2005. The primary purpose of the inspections was to evaluate areas where asbestos waste was left in place above cleanup action levels. The ACSM in the Ring Levee (OU-1) and the truck yard areas and the EEC (OU-2) has been removed.

Since asbestos waste remains buried at the three landfill areas, EPA inspected the conditions of the existing caps. Overall, there were no problems identified with the landfill areas that could result in the release of asbestos into the air. There were no significant cracks or holes in any of the caps. Under the state landfill program, the San Jose Local Enforcement Agency will continue to inspect all of the former landfill properties on a quarterly basis.

## **Technical Assessment.**

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 health-endangering asbestos into the air. More recent experience at other sites has led EPA to conclude that this standard may not be protective of human health in all cases.

This does not affect the protectiveness of the cleanup actions already taken at the SBA since major sources of asbestos have either been removed or contained.

## **Statement of Protectiveness.**

EPA has determined that clean up 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).

Because of the new understanding of the potential for the release of asbestos fibers from soil into the air, EPA is deferring the final protectiveness determination for this site until the asbestos site data can be re-evaluated. For the remedy to be protective in the long term, the controls under the existing state landfill program or the requirements of a deed restriction need to be placed on the Summerset Mobile Estates portion of the Santos Landfill and the Sainte Claire Landfill.

## **Issues and Recommendations.**

### *Asbestos Cleanup Levels.*

EPA is in the process of re-evaluating what level of asbestos is protective of human health and the environment. EPA will evaluate whether or not one percent or less asbestos in soil is sufficiently protective for the SBA site, and will re-sample, if necessary. The next five-year review will consider any revised asbestos toxicity values.

### *Landfill Areas.*

EPA is evaluating state landfill closure regulations to determine whether they provide environmental and health protection similar to the land use restrictions for the Summerset Mobile Estates portion of the Santos Landfill and the Sainte Claire Landfill.

If EPA determines that these regulations would prevent cap disturbance and exposure to asbestos-containing waste, it will officially document the decision by September 2006. If the state landfill program alone is not adequate, a deed restriction will be required for these two landfill areas.

When these issues and recommendations are addressed, EPA plans to begin the SBA site deletion process. We will continue to inform the Alviso community of our progress in these areas.



## 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 Street,  
Alviso, CA 95002,  
(408) 263-3626.  
Mon 2-7PM,  
Tues/Wed 11AM-8PM,  
Thurs-Sat 10AM-6PM.

### Superfund Records Center.

95 Hawthorne Street, Room 403,  
San Francisco, CA 94105,  
(415) 536-2000.  
Mon-Fri 8AM-5PM.

## WEB PAGE.

Information about the site is available on USEPA's webpage at: <http://www.epa.gov/region09/waste/sfund/superfundsites.html>, then click on "Site Overviews" and scroll down to South Bay Asbestos Area.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION.

If you have questions about the South Bay Asbestos Superfund Site or would like to be added to the mailing list, please contact:

**André Villaseñor,**  
Community Involvement Coordinator,  
(415) 972-3238,  
[villasenor.andre@epa.gov](mailto:villasenor.andre@epa.gov).

**Eric Yunker,**  
Project Manager,  
(415) 972-3159,  
[yunker.eric@epa.gov](mailto:yunker.eric@epa.gov).

**U.S. EPA,**  
75 Hawthorne St.  
San Francisco, CA 94105,  
(800) 231-3075.



United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Region 9,  
75 Hawthorne Street,  
San Francisco, CA 94105,  
Attn: André Villaseñor (South Bay Asbestos 12/05)

Official Business,  
Penalty for Private Use, \$300.

FIRST-CLASS MAIL  
PRESORTED  
U.S. POSTAGE  
PAID  
U.S. EPA  
Permit No. G-35

Boxholder  
Alviso, CA 95002