

# Extent of contamination in Edgewater unknown at this point

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[Edgewater](#) – More than two weeks after the discovery of new contaminants put a halt to remediation work at Veterans Field; the borough is still searching for answers on the extent of the contamination and how it will be removed.

Veterans Field remains closed two weeks after the borough stopped remediation work when new contaminants were found. The borough council is still looking for answers on how to deal with the contamination.

Mayor James Delaney said Oct. 21 that TERMS Environmental Services Inc., the firm overseeing the cleanup of the park, has tracked the contaminants to the southernmost part of the field, where it believes the contractor for the project, Waterside Construction LLC, dumped them during several unscheduled work days.

In an Oct. 3 letter, TERMS accused Waterside Construction of trucking in polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB)-contaminated crushed concrete from an unknown location and not adhering to proper testing protocols.

"The material that was imported to the site was not tested prior to being brought to the site as we have continually notified the contractor was a requirement," the letter stated. "In addition, we had previously notified the contractor that crushed concrete proposed for reuse/recycling had specific testing requirement."

TERMS said it began testing soil immediately after it became aware of possible contamination and asked Waterside Construction to hold off on spreading the concrete until the lab results came back.

According to TERMS, Waterside Construction ignored this order and mixed the material with clean fill at the site.

Initial testing revealed "extremely elevated PCB levels" spread over a much larger area than the contractor had indicated, said TERMS.

Further testing showed that crushed concrete with "elevated PCB levels" was being used as base material for sidewalks and cement pads and that a combined concrete and soil concoction with "average PCB concentration" was used as lift material on the field and under paved areas.

"The multiple placement sites, several crushing and sifting operations combined with vehicle traffic and material movement increased the potential for spread of contaminants," said TERMS in an Oct. 18 letter.

Testing results from more than 100 soil samples collected on Oct. 15 and 16 will be available on Oct. 25.

Waterside Construction, which could not be reached for comment by press time, has denied the claims made by TERMS, saying that it imported all concrete under the firm's direction and supervision.

It assured the borough in an Oct. 9 letter that if it is responsible for "inadvertently and innocently and without knowledge" importing the contaminants, it would remove and properly dispose of them "at our sole cost and expense."

The crushed concrete allegedly came from the site of the former Alcoa aluminum plant on River Road, where traces of PCBs led to a cleanup in the 1990s. The state Department of Environmental Protection has since cleared the reusing of materials from the property for other projects.

Though Delaney said he and the council were "disgusted" with the situation, they refused to point fingers at who may be at fault until they had more information.

Delaney defended the intentions of Fred Daibes, the owner of Waterside Construction, saying the [Edgewater](#) resident and developer considered the Veterans Field project "his pride and joy."

When resident Mary Hogan asked if the borough was now planning on firing him as the contractor, Delaney said, "as of now, no."

"We'd like to see the extent of the damage to the field and we'll take action from there," he said. "I believe that's the best thing for us to do at this point: just see how bad it is and which direction we should go in."

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