

EPA, State Health Officials Agree

Health Danger Reports Untrue at Quantas Site

Widespread reports that fumes that escaped last year during remediation work at the Quantas Superfund site just south of City Place were dangerously harmful are not true, according to statements released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

Quoting from a New Jersey Department of Health report, the federal agency states that there is no indication that the vapors are more dangerous than previously thought. The New Jersey Department of Health report confirms EPA's conclusions. The report says: "Long-term health effects are not expected from the measured naphthalene concentrations.

"After (EPA) made changes to the remediation (work practices) at the site, short-term concentrations of naphthalene were greatly reduced."

EPA agrees with the report's conclusions that people can experience certain short-term health effects: such as watery eyes, headaches, and nausea. EPA is aware that some people have reported these types of temporary impacts.

The report focuses, in particular, on data that had been collected at the fence line of the Superfund site

(where the most elevated readings occurred prior to March 2018), assuming, conservatively, that an individual remained at the fence line for extended periods of time (e.g., longer than an hour). As the report states, "the health effects are temporary and stop when the exposure stops. In addition to taking a number of measures to reduce volatile emissions and odors during the cleanup work, after March of last year, the air testing network greatly expanded the number of air monitors placed in the neighboring public spaces, resulting in a more representative measurement of potential exposures to site neighbors."

EPA's assessment focuses on potential long-term health impacts (i.e., permanent impacts, cancer and non-cancer illnesses) that could result from even low level exposures. EPA fully understands people's concerns and has made meaningful changes to the cleanup practices for the site to respond to the short-term symptoms of exposure discussed in the report.

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More importantly, as noted in the report, EPA has taken active steps to ensure that the work is done properly. "We have brought about improvements and new technologies to the site to ensure this., the report states. We have taken steps to ensure that the work is done safely and we will continue to oversee the work to ensure that it is done in a manner that is protective of human health. The improvements that the potentially responsible parties are making to utilize the tents were installed after the direct intervention and active engagement of EPA," the report states.

Following are the next steps planned by the EPA:

The majority (about 90%) of the remaining cleanup activities at the site (soil solidification, stockpile management, and earth moving) will be conducted under tents to reduce emissions into the air as much as pos-

at Quantas Site

sible. At this time, EPA anticipates putting up the first tenting structure beginning in late April followed by the start of soil solidification work under that tent in early May. Putting up a second tent is expected to begin in early May with soil solidification expected to start in that tent in late May. The first areas to be solidified under these tents are large areas.

To prepare for the construction of the tenting and supporting equipment, this week a crane and generator will

be mobilized to the site, and two silos (for the grout plant) will be set up at the site. Trenching to install a gas line to supply gas to the generator will also be conducted this week. While EPA doesn't anticipate naphthalene vapors to be generated from this trenching work, odor suppression techniques will be implemented. Air monitoring will continue at the site and the hotline continues to be in operation for people to call should they have any concerns: 201-807-0991.