



One Outreach - Four Languages

South Minneapolis Neighborhood Soil Contamination Site

A timeline of outreach efforts in coordination with cleanup and sampling activities at the site.
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Site Background

The CMC Heartland Lite Yard site (plant site) is located on 5 acres at the corner of Hiawatha Ave. and 28th Str. Several companies produced pesticides at the plant site from 1938 to 1968. When arsenic was discovered at the plant site, health agencies suspected that the wind might have blown contaminated dust into nearby neighborhoods. Yards were sampled north and west of the plant site. When MDA confirmed that arsenic was present on some properties, the agency asked for help from EPA in cleaning up the contamination.

Site Milestones

Following an April 1999 report, the ATSDR, in conjunction with the Minnesota Dept. of Health provided a health consultation expressing concern about the possibility of highly contaminated dust being blown off the CMC Lite Yard Site and affecting the residential area to the northwest.

May 2001

MDA asked EPA for help with the arsenic contamination at the South Minneapolis Neighborhood Soil Contamination Site.

Jan. 2004

MDA collected additional soil samples from the residential area.

Sept. 2003

EPA collected additional soil samples from approximately 400 properties in the neighborhood. Results identified 30 properties with high arsenic concentrations.

May through Oct. 2004

EPA workers removed soil from 29 of the properties identified with high concentrations of arsenic in the soil.

Oct. through Dec. 2004

EPA cleaned up the one remaining property.

May 2005

EPA sampled approximately 600 additional properties. Results identified 30 more properties that required cleanup.

June through Aug. 2005

EPA cleaned up 25 of the additional 30 properties. Approximately 60 additional properties sampled, including schools and daycares

Sept. through Nov. 2005

EPA began additional sampling activities at approximately 3,000 properties in the neighborhood.

May 2006

EPA began additional clean up activities of previously identified properties with high arsenic contamination.

June 2006

Community Profile

The neighborhood consists of diverse ethnic groups, including, Hmong, Somali, Hispanic, African American, and Native Americans being the most prevalent groups. The neighborhood has a large rental community. Most residents told EPA that while they have some concerns about the arsenic situation, they are most concerned about the crime and safety issues in the neighborhood. City officials told EPA they get more calls concerning crime and drugs in the area than calls about environmental issues. Day to day living conditions take top priority. Residents have worked through lead contamination issues in the past and feel that the arsenic contamination is a problem that will get fixed.

In the early stages of communication, EPA followed MDA's lead by sending information out in English and Spanish. After talking with the residents and local neighborhood groups, EPA realized they were not reaching many of the residents because of the language barrier. They began translating all communications including fact sheets, newspaper ads, flyers and postcards not only into Spanish but also into Somali and Hmong. However, sending out all communication in four languages was costly and time consuming so EPA created a Language and Comment Form that was sent out to residents and made available through out the community. This form asked residents for their preferred language and stated that all communication would be in English unless a specific language was requested.

Community Outreach Activities



- Assisted MDA in sending out access letters and postcards to residents requesting access for additional soil sampling during removal phase
- Letters were sent in English and Spanish



Feb. 2005

- Held open house
- Conducted community interviews

Mar. 2005

- Mailed post card and put out flyers in neighborhood stores, libraries, community centers announcing interviews and open house scheduled

Apr. 2005

- Open house
- Conducted series of interviews with residents, media and local government officials
- developed community involvement plan

May 2005

- Fact sheet "EPA Cleans Up Yards and Conducts Sampling", translated into Spanish and Somali

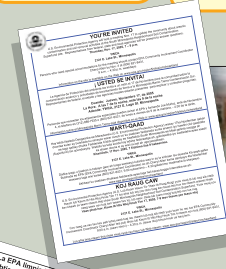
Aug. 2005

- "Sampling Strategy Will Provide Details on Arsenic" fact sheet with map of sampling area mailed to residents



Sept. 2005

- Sampling Results letters sent to property owners in Spanish, English, Somali and Hmong



Nov. 2005

- Public meeting
- Flyer sent out and posted in community storefronts



Apr. 2006

- EPA sends out postcard announcing public meeting to update the community on site activities

May 2006

- EPA holds public meeting to update the community on site activities and discuss new sampling activities
- EPA community involvement coordinators are available during each round of sampling activities
- EPA holds general open houses and interviews in each neighborhoods during sampling activities

June 2006

- EPA holds general open houses and interviews in each of neighborhoods during sampling activities

Next Steps

- EPA will begin sending out sampling results letters
- EPA will hold a public meeting to update the community on clean up activities
- EPA will update information repositories and website with current information

For more information:

Visit our website at:
www.epa.gov/region5/sites/cmcheartland
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