

FORMER PROCTOR-SILEX SITE

76-80 PLINY ST.

HARTFORD, CT

The Connecticut Departments of Public Health (CTDPH) and Environmental Protection (CTDEP) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) have been asked by the City of Hartford to respond to pollution found at the old Proctor-Silex Site on Pliny Street. This fact sheet was put together to provide information about people's health related questions and concerns.

Background

The site was used for manufacturing since the early 1900s. The earliest factory made military equipment and woolen slippers. The Proctor-Silex Company made coffee percolators for many years. After that, a company called Aronie Galleries made plastic bathroom and household products. The site was then used as an auto repair shop, a storage center for used tires and a bottle redemption center. The buildings have been abandoned for many years and were torn down this summer. When some parts of the building were dug up, chromium, a toxic metal, was brought to the surface of the soil. The chromium was found to be at unsafe levels. A cover of soil and plastic was put down right away to prevent people from coming in contact with the



What is Chromium? Can It Make Me Sick?

Chromium is a natural element that is found in 3 forms: chromium (0), chromium(III) and chromium(VI). Chromium(III) is an important part in our diet. Chromium is used in making steel and other metals, bricks and for chrome plating. Proctor-Silex likely used chromium to plate their products made in the Pliny Street factory. Chromium(VI) or hexavalent chromium was found at 76-80 Pliny St.

Most of what we know about how chromium(VI) affects our health comes from studying people who are exposed at work, usually at high levels.

- ⇒ Breathing very high levels in air can hurt and irritate your nose, lungs, stomach, and intestines.
- ⇒ Getting chromium on your skin may cause swelling, redness and may lead to skin ulcers
- ⇒ Workers have gotten cancer after breathing air with high levels of chromium.
- ⇒ **From the information we have now, it is unlikely people on or near the site were exposed to levels that would cause these problems.**

Were People Exposed to Chromium?

CTDPH is now gathering and reviewing information on the site. At this time, we do not believe it is likely that anyone was exposed to high levels of chromium that could cause health problems.

People worked cleaning bricks after the building was torn down. Were they exposed?

It is our understanding that people were cleaning the bricks before the chromium was brought to the surface. Therefore they were probably not exposed.

Children have played on the site many times. Were they exposed?

The chromium was brought to the surface very recently. Therefore children playing on the site in the past were not likely to have been exposed. A locked fence was put up soon after the chromium was brought to the surface.

Did the chromium blow in the air around the neighborhood?

Chromium tends to stick to soil, making it heavier and less likely to be spread by the wind. The chromium was only recently dug up. This makes it less likely to have been spread by the wind, since the polluted soil was only uncovered for a short time.

Why were there workers on the site in the white suits?

Workers are required by OSHA to wear special protection when going on sites like Pliny St. This is true even when the actual risk may be low. Wearing the protection does not mean there is a danger to the public.

What Are Future Activities For The Site?

- ⇒ USEPA is planning to do more sampling on the site.
- ⇒ CTDPH will be doing a further study of the site to find out more about health issues.
- ⇒ The site will be cleaned up to a level that will protect the community.
- ⇒ The agencies will work together to keep the neighborhood informed.

For More Information:

For Health Questions, Call:

Meg Harvey, CT DPH
509-7742

Hartford Health Department
543-8800

For Clean-up Questions, Call

Gil Richards, CTDEP
424-3523

Tom Hatzopoulos, USEPA
617-918-1284

For Development Questions, Call

Jeanne Webb Chavez,
Hartford Brownfields Coordinator
522-4888, ext. 6741

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