

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS ABOUT THE METROPOLITAN METAL FINISHING SITE

BACKGROUND

The Metropolitan Metal Finishing site is a half acre property located at 400 Goodrich Street in Hamden, CT with a portion of the property located in New Haven, CT. The property was originally developed as an automobile repair garage around 1948. The property was eventually developed as a metal plating facility around 1955, remaining in operation until 1996 as Global Metal Finishing and then Metropolitan Metal Finishing. A one-story, cinder-block building is located on the site. Metropolitan Metal Finishing went out of business in 1996 and the property has been vacant since then.



The US EPA did a partial removal of hazardous substances from the site in the spring and summer of 1997. Presently, there is still contamination from past plating activities inside the building. There are also several physical hazards, such as open pits inside the building. In addition, there is also several feet of contaminated water that remains in the basement of the building. The surface soil on the property is contaminated with elevated levels of chemicals.

WHAT CONTAMINANTS WERE FOUND AT THE SITE? WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL HEALTH EFFECTS?

Cyanide and chromium were mainly found inside the building. Lead, arsenic, and cadmium were found in the soil on the property.

Cyanide- Cyanide is found joined with other chemicals to form compounds, like hydrogen cyanide, sodium cyanide, or potassium cyanide. It can be produced by certain bacteria, fungi, and algae, and is found in a number of foods and plants. Cyanide and hydrogen cyanide are used in metal plating, metal-lurgy, photographic development, making plastics, fumigating ships, and some mining processes. Exposure to lower levels over a period of time can affect the respiratory system, thyroid gland, blood changes, and headaches. It is unknown whether cyanide exposure can cause birth defects in people. There are no reports on whether cyanide exposure can cause cancer.

Chromium- Chromium is a naturally occurring element found in rocks, animals, plants, soil, and in volcanic dust and gases. The most common forms of chromium are chromium (VI), chromium (0), and chromium (III). Chromium (III) occurs naturally and is considered an essential nutrient. Chromium is used for making steel, metal plating, dyes and pigments, leather tanning, and wood preserving. It is unknown whether exposure to chromium will result in birth defects or other development defects. Chromium (VI) is known to cause cancer in humans.

Lead- Lead is a naturally occurring metal found in small amounts in soil. Lead exposure can harm the nervous system, particularly in children. Lead can cause children to be born prematurely and have lower birth weights. Lead can also affect a child's mental and physical growth. Exposure to high levels of lead can affect the brain and kidneys of adults and children. Lead has not been shown to cause cancer in people.

Arsenic- Arsenic is found in nature at low levels. The major uses of arsenic are as wood preservatives and agricultural pesticides. Arsenic is very widely distributed in the environment and everyone is exposed to low levels. Long-term exposure to arsenic can increase the risk of skin, bladder, kidney, liver, and lung cancer. Exposure to arsenic can also lead to skin effects such as irritation and skin darkening.

Cadmium- Cadmium is a naturally occurring metal found in soil. In industry, it is used in batteries, pigments, metal coatings, and plastics. Long term exposure to lower levels of cadmium leads to a build up of cadmium in the kidneys or possible lung disease. Other possible long term effects are lung damage and fragile bones. There is some evidence that exposure to cadmium may lead to increased risk of lung cancer.

It is highly unlikely that any nearby residents were exposed to these chemicals. The only people who could have been exposed to were frequent trespassers.

WHAT TYPES OF CLEAN-UP ACTIVITIES WILL OCCUR AT THE SITE? WHEN WILL THEY START?

The U.S. EPA will begin remediating the property at the end of October 2009. Cleanup activities will include:

- Removing and disposing all vats and most other plating equipment inside of the building as well as decontaminating the building.
- Erecting a fence that will surround the property.
- Securing all entrances into the property.
- Pumping out all of the water in the basement.
- removing PCB-containing light ballasts and mercury-containing switches.



HOW WILL THE NEIGHBORHOOD BE PROTECTED DURING THE CLEAN-UP?

- Indoor air monitoring will be conducted to ensure that cleanup activities do not impact the air quality in the vicinity of the work area.
- On-site workers will be wearing personal protective gear while conducting cleanup activities, including white suits, gloves, and boots. This level of protection is required by federal law for cleanup workers who may be in direct, repeated contact with contaminated materials.
- Access to the work area will be restricted and measures will be taken to ensure that contaminated materials are not tracked or allowed to move off the site.
- The public will be restricted from the area during and after remediation.



HOW COULD I GET EXPOSED TO THE CHEMICALS IN THE SOIL OR INSIDE OF THE BUILDING?

In order to be exposed to chemicals inside of the building or contaminated soil outside of the building, you need to have direct contact with plating equipment, contaminated water in the basement, or any surface in the building. Direct contact means touching surfaces or water, breathing dust, or eating bulk chemicals (putting items into your mouth that have chemicals on them such as fingers or food). Repeated contact with the contaminated soil over a long period of time could result in possible health effects.

UNDERSTANDING EXPOSURES TO CHEMICALS

Any chemical that enters your body can be harmful if you take in too much. Whether your health will be affected by a chemical that gets into your body depends on several factors.

- How much of the substance you take in.
- How long you are exposed to it.
- How it enters the body (for example, through eating, drinking, breathing, or touching).
- Your age, general health and other individual traits that determine how susceptible you are to health effects.
- Other exposures you have to the same or similar substances.
- How toxic the substance is.

WHAT IF I HAVE MORE QUESTIONS?

CT Department of Public Health:

Sharee Rusnak

(860) 509-7740

sharee.rusnak@po.state.ct.us

<http://www.ct.gov/dph>

Hamden Economic Development Corporation

Dale Kroop

203-287-7033

dkroop@Hamden.com

<http://www.hamden.com/>



Quinnipiack Valley Health District

Leslie Balch or Lynn Fox

203-248-4528

info@qvhd.org

<http://www.qvhd.org>

EPA:

Michael Barry

617-918-1344

Jeanethe Falvey

Community Relations

(888) 372-7341, ext 81020

Falvey.Jeanethe@epamail.epa.gov

www.epa.gov/region1/superfund/er/index.htm

Please do your part to help out during the cleanup.

Please obey the warning signs and do not let anyone enter the work area.

Please call the site contacts if you have any questions or concerns about the project.

This fact sheet is funded in part by funds from the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act trust fund through a cooperative agreement with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, Public Health Service, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.