



Department of
Toxic Substances
Control

*Our mission is
to provide the
highest level of
safety, and to
protect public
health and the
environment
from toxic
harm.*



State of California



California
Environmental
Protection Agency

Proposed Cleanup Plan Available for Public Comment for the Los Alamitos Elementary School - Railroad Easement Site Los Alamitos, CA

This Fact Sheet shares information regarding the cleanup of arsenic-impacted soil in an area north of the Los Alamitos Elementary School. Environmental investigation in 2003 revealed the presence of elevated arsenic. As a result, the unpaved area was fenced off and covered with heavy plastic sheeting and sand bags to prevent exposure to impacted soil.

A draft cleanup plan to excavate, remove and dispose of impacted soil at the Los Alamitos Elementary School - Railroad Easement site (Site) for the proposed restoration of a parking lot is available for public review and comment. The Site is located north of Los Alamitos Elementary School and Orange County Deaf and Hard of Hearing School and south of McAuliffe Middle School in Los Alamitos. The draft cleanup plan, called a draft Removal Action Workplan (RAW), describes in detail the environmental investigation findings and the proposed remedy to address soil contamination at the Site.

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is part of the California Environmental Protection Agency. DTSC oversees soil and groundwater investigations at proposed new or expanding school sites, and evaluates property for potential hazardous materials or contamination that may pose a risk to school children, the staff or faculty. If contamination is found, DTSC oversees the cleanup of the property in accordance with state and federal laws and regulations.



Aerial View of Los Alamitos Elementary School – Railroad Easement Site

PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR DRAFT REMOVAL ACTION WORKPLAN AND CEQA DRAFT NEGATIVE DECLARATION

January 4, 2012 through February 3, 2012

A 30-day public comment period for the draft RAW and draft Negative Declaration will begin **January 4, 2012 and end February 3, 2012. All public comments must be postmarked or e-mailed by February 3, 2012 and sent to:**

Ms. Christine Chiu, Project Manager
Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630-4732
E-mail: cchiu@dtsc.ca.gov



Why Cleanup is Necessary

DTSC is the lead regulatory agency assessing the potential environmental effects at the Site. The goal of the proposed cleanup is to ensure that the Site is safe for students, faculty and staff in the future if arsenic-impacted soil is disturbed for parking lot restoration or other construction related activity.

Currently, the public school students and faculty from Los Alamitos Elementary School, Orange County Deaf and Hard of Hearing School, and the nearby McAuliffe Middle School are **not** exposed to the impacted soil. The soil containing arsenic is covered primarily by pavement and, in a small fenced and secured area, covered with heavy plastic sheeting and sand bags to prevent public exposure.

The Site was part of a historical railroad line. Railroad tracks occupied the Site from the 1930s until the 1980s. Previous railroad track maintenance involved spraying an herbicide containing arsenic to control weed growth. These historical activities resulted in the release of arsenic in soil at the Site at levels that require cleanup to ensure long-term public health and safety for future Site restoration, construction, development and school students and faculty.

Arsenic is a natural element found in soil and water. It has also been used in pesticides, herbicides, and the production of electrical devices. These applications have sometimes resulted in higher concentrations than is usually found in the environment. At locations where there have been releases of arsenic to soil by human activities, people's exposure to arsenic may be higher than usual through the accidental eating or inhalation of small amounts of soil. Exposure to arsenic may result in adverse health effects.

Site Background and History

The Site is located directly north of Los Alamitos Elementary School and south of McAuliffe Middle School in Los Alamitos. The Site is a portion of a former railroad track easement about 100 feet wide by 950 feet long and was paved into its current condition as a parking lot for the Los Alamitos Elementary School.

In 2003, the Orange County Department of Education (OCDE) investigated the Site and found elevated levels of arsenic in the soil. The levels were found at depths from near surface to six feet below the surface but primarily in the top 2.5 feet. In 2005, a draft RAW was prepared for public comment but OCDE terminated the project in 2007.

In 2010, the Los Alamitos Unified School District entered into a voluntary agreement with DTSC and was approved to use Federal funds in October 2011 to cleanup the Site and complete the parking lot restoration.

Proposed Cleanup Plan

If approved, the RAW would include the following activities:

- Prepare and secure the work area with fencing;
- Excavate and transport about 3,832 cubic yards (225 truck loads) of impacted soil to a licensed disposal facility;
- Backfill excavated area with clean soil and restore the surface with asphalt.

Safety Measures and Dust Control During Cleanup Activities

The following actions will be implemented to ensure public safety and minimize dust during soil excavation and removal activities:

- Spraying work areas and truck contents with clean water to control dust;
- Driving vehicles at slow speeds while on the Site;
- Minimizing soil drop height into transport trucks;
- Securing truck contents with tarp before leaving the Site;
- Brushing truck tires to remove soil and debris;
- Monitoring air quality to ensure dust levels remain protective the community.

California Environmental Quality Act

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is a state law that requires the lead agency of a project to consider and disclose the environmental effects of its proposed actions before approving them. In accordance with CEQA, a draft Negative Declaration was prepared because the proposed RAW activities would not have a significant effect on the environment.

How You Can Participate

A 30-day public comment period begins January 4, 2012, and ends February 3, 2012, to receive public comments on the draft RAW and draft Negative Declaration. Public comments must be postmarked or e-mailed no later than February 3, 2012, and sent to:

Ms. Christine Chiu, DTSC Project Manager

Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630-4732
E-mail: cchiu@dtsc.ca.gov

Next Steps

At the end of the Public Comment Period, DTSC will review and consider any public comments received and make any necessary revisions to the draft RAW prior to final approval. Also, a Response to Comments document will be mailed to everyone who submits a comment and provides their name and address.

Site cleanup activities are projected to take about six weeks and will be conducted in the summer 2012 when school students, faculty and staff are off on school break. An alternate location for summer school will be provided for the Orange County Deaf and Hard of Hearing School. Work days and hours are Monday through Friday from 7:00 am to 4:00 pm with occasional work on weekends. No street or road closures are expected to occur. During cleanup activities, there will be no public access to the main parking lot at the Los Alamitos Elementary School.

Where to Find Site Documents

The draft RAW, CEQA draft Negative Declaration and other project documents are available for public review at the following Information Repositories:

Los Alamitos Unified School District
10293 Bloomfield Street
Los Alamitos, CA 90720
(562) 799-4700
Hours: 8:00 am – 4:00 pm Monday through Friday

Department of Toxic Substances Control
Regional Records Room
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630-4732
(714) 484-5337
Monday – Friday: 8:00 am to 5:00 pm
Please call the above number to make an appointment.

Copies of key technical reports, fact sheets and other site-related information are also available online at DTSC's website: at www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public.

All documents made available to the public by DTSC can be made available in an alternate format (i.e. Braille, large print, etc.) or in another language as appropriate, in accordance with state and federal law. Please contact Zenzi Poindexter for assistance.

Who to Contact for More Information

If you have any questions about the project, draft RAW, CEQA draft Negative Declaration or other project related activities, please contact the following DTSC staff:

Ms. Christine Chiu, Project Manager
Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630-4732
(714) 484-5340
E-mail: cchiu@dtsc.ca.gov

Ms. Zenzi Poindexter, Public Participation Specialist
Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630-4732
(714) 484-5477
E-mail: upoindex@dtsc.ca.gov

Media Inquiries

Ms. Sandy Friedman, Public Information Officer
Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630-4732
(714) 484-5383
E-mail: sfriedma@dtsc.ca.gov

Notice to Hearing-Impaired Individuals

You can obtain additional information about the Site by using the California State Relay Service at 1 (888) 877-5378 (TDD). Ask them to contact Zenzi Poindexter at (866) 495-5651 regarding the Los Alamitos Elementary School site.

PUBLIC COMMENT FORM AND MAILING COUPON
30-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD FOR DRAFT REMOVAL ACTION WORKPLAN
AND DRAFT NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR
LOS ALAMITOS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - RAILROAD EASEMENT SITE
10862 BLOOMFIELD STREET, LOS ALAMITOS, CA

You may use this form to send in your written public comments on the draft Removal Action Workplan (RAW) and CEQA draft Negative Declaration. You may also use this form to ask to be added to or deleted from the Site mailing list. If you know of any persons or organization that would like to be on the mailing list, use this form to notify us. Please address all mailings to Ms. Christine Chiu, DTSC Project Manager, Department of Toxic Substances Control, 5796 Corporate Avenue, Cypress, CA 90630-4732.

Reminder: All public comments on the draft RAW and CEQA draft Negative Declaration must be postmarked or e-mailed by February 3, 2012.

Name: _____ **Telephone No.:** (____) _____

Agency or Organization (if applicable): _____

Address: _____

Add me Delete me to/from the Los Alamitos Elementary School-Railroad Easement Site mailing list

Comments:

DTSC mailings are solely for the purpose of keeping people informed of DTSC activities. Mailing lists are not routinely released to outside parties. However, they are considered public records and, if requested, may be subject to release.

Zenzi Poindexter, Public Participation Specialist
Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630

Inside: Information on the Los Alamitos Elementary School - Railroad Easement Site

For more information about the DTSC, please visit our website at www.dtsc.ca.gov