

Work Notice
July 2004

Santa Susana Field Laboratory



EXCAVATION HAS BEGUN

DTSC is one of six Boards and Departments within the California Environmental Protection Agency. The Department's mission is to restore, protect and enhance the environment, to ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality, by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.

State of California



California
Environmental
Protection Agency



View of Area A from Bldg 203

Mercury contaminated soil is being removed

On July 20, 2004, Boeing began the process of removing mercury-contaminated soil near Building 203 at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL). Cleanup of this area will occur prior to the site-wide cleanup in order to stop contaminated soil from moving farther down the drainages during storm events. The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) approved a Workplan that outlines the work to be performed over the next several months. The excavation will cover one area with an estimated removal of 3,000 cubic yards of soil. Two nearby areas will also be addressed and may require a smaller excavation.

Mercury was used at Building 203

Building 203 is located in the north-central portion of SSFL. NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) used the building to repair and calibrate research instruments, some of which contained mercury. These activities are believed to be related to the source of the mercury detected in soil behind the building. Mercury is no longer used there.

Soil removal will occur

Cleanup and additional investigation is planned for three separate contaminated areas — Areas A, B and C. Area A is the soil nearest to Building 203, which is located on a gradual slope. The highest concentration of mercury was found in Area A at 50 ppm. Areas B and C are smaller areas farther down the slope from Area A. Lower mercury concentrations were found in Areas B and C, at or below 1 ppm (parts per million).

Excavation of Area A has already begun. The Workplan estimates that Boeing will excavate 3,000 cubic yards of soil from Area A to remove high levels of mercury. The excavated soil will be temporarily stockpiled onsite. Excavation of Area A is expected to last approximately two weeks. Confirmation samples will be taken to ensure that levels of mercury do not exceed background levels (.09 ppm) in the remaining soil. If samples of the remaining soil show levels of mercury higher than what is normally found in that area (referred to as background levels), further digging will continue. The stockpiled soil will also be sampled for levels of mercury before being trucked offsite to an appropriate disposal facility. The dates that soil will be removed offsite are not set, but will occur by late summer. It is anticipated the amount of soil to be moved will be between 150 – 250 truckloads.

Areas B and C are located along a drainage area. Further testing is needed to determine if excavation is necessary in these areas. Boeing will submit an updated Workplan for Areas B and C at a later date.

You can review the Workplan

This type of fieldwork that addresses cleanup which is necessary prior to the site-wide cleanup is called an “interim measure”. The Workplan for this interim measure is titled “The Building 203 Drainage Interim Measures Expendable Launch Vehicle RFI Site (SWMU 5.2)” dated September, 2003. The original Workplan anticipated excavation of 1,700 cubic yards of soil, but further tests indicated the removal may involve up to 3,000 cu. yds. An addendum to the Workplan was prepared and approved by DTSC for the removal of the additional amount of soil. The addendum, titled, “The Building 203 Interim Measures Workplan Scope Revision” (July 16, 2004) and the Workplan can be found in the repositories listed below.

You can contact us if you have questions

If you have questions regarding this Interim Measure to remove mercury from the Building 203 area, please contact any of the following DTSC staff:

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For media inquiries, please contact:
Jeanne Garcia, Public Information Officer
Phone: (818) 551-2176 or Jgarcia1@dtsc.ca.gov

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION:

California State University, Northridge
Attn: Robert Marshall (818) 677-2832
Urban Archives Center
Oviatt Library, Room 265 (West Wing)
18111 Nordhoff Sreet
Northridge, CA 91330-8329

Los Angeles Public Library – Platt Branch
Attn: Janet Metzler (818) 340-9386
23600 Victory Hills Blvd
Woodland Hills, CA 91367

You may review the documents at these locations:

Simi Valley Library
Attn: Dale Redfield (805) 526-1735
2969 Tapo Canyon Road
Simi Valley, CA 93063

DTSC Regional Records Office
Attn: Jone Barrio (818) 551-2886
1011 N. Grandview Avenue
Glendale, CA 91201