



CSXT Depriest Signal Shop March 18, 2005

Introduction

The Georgia Division of Public Health (GDPH) received a request from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GEPD) to address health issues related to the CSXT DePriest Signal Shop (CSXT) site in Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia. Several residents living near CSXT have expressed concern about contamination found in soil at East Broad Street Elementary School (EBES) and Mother Matilda Beasley Park (MP), both of which are located adjacent to CSXT.

Site Description and History

CSXT is located on Liberty Street in Savannah, Chatham County, Georgia. Residential neighborhoods and Hubert Middle School are located east of the site. MP and EBES are located west of, and adjacent to CSXT. Residential neighborhoods are located to the north and south of the site. The Savannah River is approximately one mile north of CSXT.

The CSXT property contains three buildings that make up the signal shop, a parking lot, and a vegetated yard. The property is fenced and a gated entrance to the site is guarded and locked after hours. There was a gap in the western fence bordering MP and children attending EBES use this gap as a shortcut route to and from school. However, when MP was closed in October 2003, this gap was repaired.

Historical site activities included passenger transport, freight transport, and locomotive repair facilities. By 1916 all passenger rail and transport related activities ceased. As of 1990, railroad maintenance, repair, and storage activities were discontinued. The signal shop is still operating to repair and store signals used by the railroad. Hazardous waste generated by operations is managed, stored and transported off-site in accordance with RCRA hazardous waste management regulations.

Environmental Sampling

Between July and December 2003, approximately 1,700 surface and subsurface soil samples were collected from the following locations:

- The playground, on the south side of the EBES building

- Along the southeast side of the EBES property
- The property line between CSXT and EBES
- Between the southwest side of the EBES building and East Broad Street
- The north and south courtyards of EBES property
- The MP property
- The Hubert Middle School property

Sampling was conducted systematically using a 25-foot grid throughout the sampling areas. Surface soil grab samples were collected from 0 to 6 inches below ground surface (bgs), while subsurface soil grab samples were collected from greater than 6 inches bgs.

Results

Several contaminants were found in on-site and off-site soil above levels of health concern in some areas at the school and park. However, contamination was found only in isolated "hot spots" the public is unlikely to access repeatedly, or for extended periods of time. In response to community requests, the Chatham County Commission closed MP. The Chatham County Health Department offered blood lead level screenings to residents. Approximately 200 individuals were tested and no elevated blood lead levels were found. Remedial activities were performed at the school and park, and site cleanup activities were completed by the end of 2004.

Conclusions

GDPH has categorized this site as **no apparent public health hazard**. Based on past and the most recent soil sampling results, children attending the school, as well as adults, local residents, and other children who access the school grounds or park were not in the past, nor are they currently, exposed to contaminated soil at levels that are likely to cause adverse health effects. Future exposure to contaminants is not likely because the school and park have undergone remediation.

Recommendations

- GDPH recommends that workers be informed of potential exposures.