Department of Toxic Substances Control

Preventing environmental damage from hazardous waste, and restoring contaminated sites for all Californians.

State of California

California Environmental Protection Agency

Fact Sheet, November 2007

Wyle Labs Investigation Update

The investigation and cleanup of the former Wyle Laboratories (Wyle Labs) site in Norco, California, continues. The 429-acre site (site) located at 1841 Hillside Avenue, is a former defense, aerospace, and consumer-product testing facility operated from the late 1950s until 2004. The goal of this investigation at Wyle Labs is to identify and cleanup hazardous substance releases. This fact sheet provides details on our ongoing investigation and findings as well as:

- Site history
- Sampling results at Norco High School's Science Building
- Sampling results at 24 homes north and west of Wyle Labs
- Update on the ongoing remedial investigation
- Status of the screening feasibility study
- Status of the on-site pilot project to evaluate a possible groundwater cleanup technology
- Planned groundwater remediation actions
- Ongoing groundwater and soil gas cleanup activities
- Next steps

Site History

Wyle Labs tested products and materials for the defense, aerospace, manufacturing, and consumer product industries. The site is divided into several areas; each typically consisted of one or more small buildings and/or outdoor testing areas built for specific kinds of tests. The majority of these buildings have been demolished, and only a few structures remain at the site. The site currently is unoccupied.

Hazardous substances such as chlorinated solvents, petroleum hydrocarbons, explosives, and rocket motor fuels were handled and/or used during operations. Such use and/or handling resulted in the release of hazardous substances into soil, in localized areas, and groundwater. Also, the site is fenced with site security restricting public access.

Open House Announcement

Wednesday, November 14, 2007
5:00PM to 9:00PM

DTSC invites you to attend our Open House to discuss the environmental cleanup activities being conducted at the Wyle Labs site. You will have an opportunity to talk with DTSC staff directly about your concerns or questions you may have. There will be no formal presentation given; rather DTSC staff will be available to meet freely and interface with you one-on-one to discuss your concerns. The Open House is being held to assist the community with understanding the activities at the Wyle Labs site. Please join us at:

Corona-Norco Unified School District
Learning Center North Meeting Room
2820 Clark Avenue
Norco, CA 92860

For more information or to request reasonable accommodation (such as Spanish translation), please contact Ms. Stacey Lear at (714) 484-5354 at least one week prior to the Open House.

Sampling Results at Norco High School – Science Building

Vinyl chloride was detected inside the Science Building at Norco High School on three separate sampling events. In December 2006 and July 2007, soil gas samples were taken from 8 locations below the Science Building floor and from 11 locations around the perimeter of the Science Building. The results of both the December 2006 and July 2007 sampling demonstrated trichloroethene (TCE) and vinyl chloride were not detected below the floor or in samples around the outside of the Science Building. The results of these two rounds of soil gas sampling indicate neither soil gas nor groundwater under and around the buildings is a source of vinyl chloride. The low levels of vinyl chloride are likely from a source inside the Science Building. Nevertheless, DTSC determined Norco High School, including the Science Building, continues to be safe.

Sampling Results at 27 Homes

Indoor air sampling was done at 27 homes on Golden West Lane, Third Street, Hillside Avenue, and Buckboard Lane between November and December 2006, and again between June and July 2007 to evaluate the possibility for vapor to enter homes from shallow groundwater. During the June and July 2007 sampling event, three homeowners did not provide access to DTSC, therefore no sampling was performed in these homes.

Homes were selected based on their locations over the known shallow groundwater contamination. Samples were taken after access was authorized by homeowners. Sampling was repeated in 24 of the original 27 homes as access could not be obtained from three homeowners.

Two 24-hour indoor air samples and one outside ambient air sample were collected from each home. Results of the two rounds of indoor air sampling generally were consistent with one another. The majority of the homes exhibited volatile organic compounds (VOC) levels similar to those found in outside air and are considered safe. DTSC determined that three homes contained levels of TCE so low that they do not pose an immediate or long-term risk to residents. Elevated levels of TCE were detected in one home. Further investigation of this home indicated the TCE is likely from a source inside the home and related to the homeowner's use/storage of TCE-containing gun cleaner. However, our investigation continues at this home.

Update on Ongoing Remedial Investigation

Bedrock underlying the Northwest Area of the Wyle site was evaluated to provide a better understanding of how groundwater flows through the fractures or cracks in the granite. The July 2007 test included drilling 25 coreholes. In August 2007, three additional coreholes were drilled for running a tracer test to evaluate possible paths between fractures in the granite. Two different types of dyes were injected into three wells and then samples were taken downgradient. These investigations are ongoing and expected to be completed by the end of 2007.

Evaluation of the hazardous substance release areas and contaminated groundwater plume continues. In September 2007, we approved the Interim Remedial Investigation Report, which described and interpreted the results of the remedial investigation conducted through the end of 2006. DTSC requested additional sampling that was conducted during the first quarter of 2007 and in August through September of 2007. Results of this additional sampling will be included in the Final Remedial Investigation Report, which will be completed early in 2008.

The extent of the on-site and off-site releases of hazardous substances were identified through the remedial investigation. The main hazardous substances are VOCs, including TCE and to a lesser extent perchloroethene (PCE). The semi-volatile organic compound, N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA) also is a chemical of concern.

Feasibility Study

A screening feasibility study was prepared in June 2007 to provide a preliminary review of various cleanup approaches and technologies and identify a "short list" of proposed cleanup approaches and technologies for specific areas of the site. This study will be revised once the remedial investigation report is complete. A comprehensive Feasibility Study will be submitted to DTSC in mid 2008.

Groundwater Cleanup Test

A groundwater cleanup technology called chemical oxidation is being tested in an area of the site where a TCE release occurred. Initial results of the test show this new technology is successful in destroying the TCE and other VOCs in groundwater. Results of the test will continue to be monitored through the end of 2007 and a final report will be prepared after completion of the test monitoring. Results will help determine if the same technology can effectively be used to clean up soil and groundwater in other areas both on-site and off-site.

Planned Groundwater Remediation – Groundwater Containment in Northwest Area

In July 2007, we approved a preliminary design for an interim Hydraulic Containment System to be installed to control and reduce the migration of impacted groundwater from the Northwest Area to off-site areas. This system will help keep groundwater from moving off-site. Removed groundwater will be treated on-site and discharged just south of Area F under permit issued by Santa Ana Regional Water Quality Control Board. This system is expected to begin operation in early 2008.

Groundwater and Soil Gas Cleanup

Two cleanup systems are operating at the site. The first system is a groundwater and soil gas extraction system, which has operated on-site since 2004. This system was temporarily shut down in late 2006 to allow the chemical oxidation test to be conducted in the same area. The second system is a soil vapor extraction system, which has operated on-site and off-site on Golden West Lane since late 2005. The systems have removed either impacted groundwater or soil vapor from beneath the ground surface. Removed fluids are treated using granular activated carbon to remove VOCs. Both systems are successful in removing VOCs from soil gas and groundwater, even as investigations continued.

Next Steps

Activities to be completed in the coming months include:

- Completion and evaluation of the on-site groundwater cleanup test;
- Evaluation of the tracer test;
- Evaluation of the additional bedrock evaluation;
- Completion of final step out sampling for the remedial investigation;
- Completion of the final Feasibility Study and the final remedial investigation reports; and
- Installation and operation of the Hydraulic Containment System in the Northwest Area to control and reduce the migration of contamination off-site.

Who to Contact for More Information

If you have any questions about the project activities, please contact the following persons:

Mr. Rafat Abbasi, P.E., Senior Project Manager
Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630-4732
(714) 484-5449
E-mail: rabbasi@dtsc.ca.gov

Ms. Stacey Lear, Public Participation Specialist
Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630-4732
(714) 484-5354 or toll-free 1-866- 495-5651
E-mail: slear@dtsc.ca.gov

Where to Find Project Documents

Copies of project documents and related reports are available for public review at the following Information Repositories:

Corona Norco Library
Heritage Room
650 S. Main Street
Corona, CA 92882
(951) 736-2381

Norco City Hall
Community Development Office
2870 Clark Avenue
Norco, CA 92860
(951) 270-5661

Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, CA 90630-4732
(714) 484-5337
Mon – Fri 8:00AM – 5:00PM
Please contact Ms. Julie Johnson at the above number to make an appointment.

For Media Inquiries Contact

Ms. Sandra 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

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

Notice to Hearing Impaired Individuals

TDD users can use the California Relay Service at 1-888-877-5378 to reach Ms. Stacey Lear, DTSC Public Participation Specialist at (714) 484-5354 or toll-free 1-866-495-5651.

Stacey Lear, Public Participation Specialist
Department of Toxic Substances Control
5796 Corporate Avenue
Cypress, California 90630

Inside: Information on the Wyle Laboratories Site, Norco, CA

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