

COMMUNITY UPDATE

The mission of DTSC is to protect California's people and environment from harmful effects of toxic substances by restoring contaminated resources, enforcing hazardous waste laws, reducing hazardous waste generation, and encouraging the manufacture of chemically safer products.

Indoor Air Studies at AMethod Public Schools (AMPS) High School and Middle School

The Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is in the process of evaluating contaminants at the properties located at 345 12th Street (existing Oakland Charter High School [high school]) and 301 12th Street (former Downtown Charter Academy [middle school]), Oakland CA. The high school and middle school are part of the AMethod Public Schools (AMPS) system. Sampling found a chemical called trichloroethylene (TCE) in the indoor air of both schools. TCE and other chemicals are also present in the soil beneath the buildings. TCE is a cancer causing chemical. The United States Environmental Protection Agency has linked TCE to increased potential for birth defects. DTSC believes this chemical came from past industrial uses at these buildings.

As part of the sale process for the properties, the prospective buyer conducted several studies. The buyer shared these results with the property owner, AMPS, and DTSC in mid-May of 2016. DTSC, the school, and the property owner took immediate steps to reduce the exposure to indoor air contamination. These steps included:

- Temporarily moving AMPS middle school students and staff to another location. There was no need to move the high school students and staff, as sampling indicated that building was safe,
- Installing and operating twelve air filtering units in the classrooms in both schools,
- Adjusting the ventilation systems.

Indoor air samples collected after installation of the filtering units showed indoor air to be safe, and the middle school students and staff were allowed to return to finish the 2015/2016 school year and 2016 summer school session.

In addition, a soil vapor extraction system was installed to remove TCE and other chemicals from the soils under the building. The extraction system began operating in July 2016, after the property owner obtained an operation permit from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District. Indoor air sampling continued in July and August 2016 and confirmed that the extraction system effectively reduced the potential for the soil vapor to enter the buildings.

After reviewing the indoor air and data from the operating extraction system, DTSC determined it was safe to allow high school students and staff to return to the classrooms to start the 2016/2017 academic year. AMPS decided to move the middle school to another location, and for the 2016/2017 academic year, the high school occupies the former middle school classrooms.

Monthly indoor air samples continue to show the indoor air to be safe for the students, faculty and staff. Monthly indoor air samples will continue to be collected during the remaining 2016/2017 school year to ensure conditions remain protective. DTSC adds the indoor air results to the DTSC's project website as the information is made available.

DTSC is working with the property owners to clean up the contamination and provide a safe environment for AMPS students and faculty, and the community. We will send you periodic updates on our progress.



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