



EPA Adds Wolff-Alport Chemical Company Ridgewood-Queens/Bushwick-Brooklyn, NY To National Priorities List

Community Update

June 2014

SITE HISTORY

The now-defunct Wolff-Alport Chemical Company operated from 1920 until 1954, processing imported monazite sand to extract rare earth metals. Monazite contains approximately 6% to 8% thorium, which is radioactive. The company disposed of thorium waste in the sewer and on its property until 1947, when the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission ordered the company to stop those practices.

The site is located on 1125-1139 Irving Avenue and 1514 Cooper Avenue in Ridgewood, on the border of Brooklyn and Queens. The property includes six parcels of land with five buildings that house several small businesses and warehouse space.

Contact Information:

Cecilia Echols
Community Involvement Coordinator
(212) 637-3678
echols.cecilia@epa.gov
Toll free at 800-346-5009

Thomas Mongelli
Remedial Project Manager
(212) 637-4256
mongelli.thomas@epa.gov

Introduction

On May 8, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the addition of the Wolff-Alport Chemical Company site to the National Priorities List, a federal list of hazardous waste sites, making it eligible for federal Superfund funding. Soil and nearby sewers were contaminated by radioactive material from past industrial activities at the site.

The EPA is in the process of securing a contractor to perform a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study. The purpose of the Remedial Investigation is to determine the nature and extent of contamination at the site and the potential risks to humans and wildlife from site contaminants. The purpose of a Feasibility Study is to identify and evaluate cleanup alternatives.

Recent Site Activity

Radiological data was collected through a multiagency effort from July 29 - August 5, 2013 within a half-mile vicinity from the site. The analyses of the collected data indicated that there is no elevated off-site exposure to the surrounding community from radiological contaminants located on-site and in areas directly adjacent to the site.

In December 2013, the EPA completed several actions that reduced potential radiation exposure, including:

- Placement of shielding material, including concrete, lead and steel on top of the existing building floors and the adjacent concrete sidewalk along Irving Avenue;
- Installation of a radon mitigation system to address radioactive gas in the interior space of one business; and
- Installation of a fence around a vacant parcel of land adjacent to the affected businesses to prevent trespassing onto an area where radiation contamination is present;

The EPA conducted outreach to a daycare center, an intermediate school, local businesses and their employees, and held a public meeting.

www.epa.gov/region02/waste/wolff/index.html