

# ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10

April 2005

## More Information about Temporary Relocation

### *Why is EPA authorizing and paying for temporary relocation?*

Consistent with EPA's "Temporary Relocation Guidance" published in 2002, temporary voluntary relocation at North Ridge Estates is justified because:

- **Health threats:** uncontrolled exposure to asbestos fibers are likely to be worse during hot, dry summer months with children out of school;
- **Safety of residents:** field sampling and other removal activities may generate more releases of asbestos contaminants that raise personal safety concerns to residents;
- **Efficiency of response action:** temporary relocation minimizes concerns about noise, property access, and other restrictions on the hours or types of response activities that may be conducted at the Site.

### *How does EPA decide which households will be relocated?*

Households interested in temporary relocation must submit an application to EPA. An *example* of this application is included with EPA's Temporary Relocation Guidance, Attachment 12. Among other things, the application must establish residency within the Site, identify the number of household occupants and pets, and identify any special needs. EPA will promptly review all applications and provide written notice of the application's approval.

For an *example* of this notice, see Attachment 7 of EPA's Temporary Relocation Guidance. EPA and the residents must then sign a Temporary Relocation Agreement before the temporary relocation may be carried out. See Temporary Relocation Guidance, Attachment 10. Among other things, the Temporary Relocation Agreement will specify the amount of rent and other expenses that EPA will agree to reimburse for each household.

### *Can EPA decisions about relocating residents and costs, etc. be appealed?*

Yes. As stated in the Temporary Relocation Agreement (see Temporary Relocation Guidance, Attachment 10), "it is EPA's policy to provide [residents] an opportunity to have their disputes reviewed by an EPA official not involved in the disputed issue, and that they must describe their dispute in writing to EPA."

### *How many households does EPA expect to relocate?*

EPA believes that at least 12 households at North Ridge Estates will seek temporary relocation. EPA is budgeting for up to 27 households seeking temporary relocation.

### *Who will pay for relocation?*

EPA intends to fund the temporary relocation from funds presently available to EPA. Those costs may be recovered from MBK or other Potentially Responsible Parties under EPA's Superfund authority.

### *Did EPA relocate people in response to the asbestos contamination at Libby, Montana? If not, why here?*

EPA Region 8 did relocate people—and businesses—at Libby, temporarily, while their homes and buildings were cleaned. (*Permanent relocation did not appear feasible there because the extent of contamination in Libby limited the availability of safe, alternative housing.*) The extent of contamination associated with North Ridge Estates appears much more limited, so that safe, sufficient, alternative housing in the local area should be available for temporary relocation.

***Is there suitable temporary alternate housing available in Klamath Falls?***

Informal surveys of the rental market in Klamath Falls indicate that suitable temporary housing should be available locally.

***Will relocated residents have to live in hotels or tiny apartments all summer?***

No. Residents qualifying for temporary relocation will be provided with "comparable replacement housing." As defined by EPA's Temporary Relocation Guidance, Attachment 6, "comparable replacement housing" means housing that is decent, safe, and sanitary, that is functionally equivalent to the original dwelling, that is adequate in size to accommodate the occupants, and that meets other criteria specified in the federal regulations.

***Can we select our own replacement housing?***

Residents will be encouraged to help identify their own temporary relocation housing after being informed by EPA about the types of housing and the amount of rent that will be eligible for reimbursement.

***What is the maximum rent allowable? When will we be informed?***

The maximum rent allowable for reimbursement for each household will be specified individually in the notice letters from EPA approving the temporary relocation applications. See Temporary Relocation Guidance, Attachment 7. Reimbursable amounts will also be confirmed in the individual Temporary Relocation Agreements. See Temporary Relocation Guidance, Attachment 10.

***I understand that MBK owns a lot of real estate in Klamath Falls - will EPA allow MBK or its partners to profit through the relocation?***

EPA and its contractors and representatives will work with individual homeowners to identify suitable temporary housing for each household, regardless of property ownership or profits.

***What if I don't want to move? Will we be allowed to remain in our home?***

The temporary relocation to be offered by EPA is voluntary. Residents who choose not to be relocated may be advised to continue taking precautions to avoid or minimize exposure to asbestos contamination. Additional precautions may also be encouraged to address particular concerns about certain site activities or weather events.

***Will home furnishings be moved along with residents?***

Unless furnished housing is provided, essential home furnishings may be moved along with residents. For a list of "essential furniture items," see Temporary Relocation Guidance, Attachment 8.

***Do we have to move our furniture? Can't we find furnished housing to avoid the burden of moving?***

For short-term temporary relocations, it may be less expensive and less burdensome to rent furniture or rent a furnished apartment, rather than reimburse residents for the costs of moving furniture from and back to their original residence. If EPA determines that it is the most cost-effective and least burdensome alternative, EPA may authorize payments for rental furniture or furnished housing. For details, see EPA's Temporary Relocation Guidance, Sec. VII.B (Furniture Rental/Moving Costs).

***Will relocated residents be allowed back to homes to retrieve items or check on conditions?***

In accordance with the terms of the Temporary Relocation Agreement that must be signed by each household participating in the relocation (see Temporary Relocation Guidance, Attachment 10), "Residents understand that, for safety reasons, they will not be able to return to their primary residence while they are temporarily relocated, and they should take all necessary personal property and records to their temporary residence." To ensure safety, any exceptions must be arranged in advance with the EPA Project Manager.

***Will provisions be made for pets?***

Yes. Reasonable accommodations will be made for household pets, which may include kennels for dogs and pasture fees for horses.

***How will the security of relocated residents' homes and properties be maintained?***

The cost estimate in the temporary relocation action memo contemplates funding for a security guard to be posted at the Site at least during evening and nighttime hours when other contractors will not otherwise be present on the Site.

***Will property owners have a say in any actual cleanup activities that occur while they are temporarily relocated? How?***

Any cleanup or other activities conducted on private property by EPA or under EPA's direction will be subject to the terms of access agreements signed with each of the property owners, including those temporarily relocated. Relocated property owners will be kept informed of activities at the Site during the temporary relocation, and will be given opportunities to comment on proposed actions or draft documents such as the draft RI/FS work plan. Relocated property owners may be contacted by email, telephone, mailings, or other forms of communication as requested and appropriate.

***How long will EPA pay for temporary relocation?***

EPA currently anticipates temporary relocation for North Ridge Estates to extend from approximately June 10 to September 10, 2005, as specified in the Temporary Relocation Action Memo.

***What are the criteria for returning residents to their homes?***

Criteria for returning residents to their homes should include (1) children returning to school and (2) no immediate safety concerns related to on-going actions at the Site.

***Will EPA sample interiors before residents return in September? How will we know we're safe?***

House dust sampling in 2003 showed very low or no levels of asbestos fibers in interiors, even after the intensive earth-moving and soil-disturbing activities of grading and home construction in the area. Activities contemplated at the Site this summer should be much less intensive than that, so the likelihood of releasing asbestos fibers into homes—and the need for further interior sampling—should be near zero, particularly if doors and windows remain closed for the summer. Safety will be further assured by adjusting site activities upon the return of residents.

***What will EPA do if I don't want to return to my home?***

In accordance with the terms of the Temporary Relocation Agreement that must be signed by each household participating in the relocation (see Temporary Relocation Guidance, Attachment 10), "Residents understand that EPA will notify them when their temporary relocation assistance will end. If residents choose not to return to their primary residence after that date, they are responsible for any additional expenses they incur." Of course, if there are any safety hazards at the Site or other serious concerns about returning to their homes, residents may raise such concerns to the EPA Project Manager.

***What happens next summer? Do we relocate people annually?***

The possibility of temporary relocations beyond this summer cannot be determined at this time because of many possible intervening factors. For example, permanent relocations could be offered before the end of this summer as a result of settlement discussions between homeowner plaintiffs and the developer.

### **For More Information on Relocation:**

Go online to:

<http://www.epa.gov/superfund/tools/topics/relocation/index.htm>

Scroll to Superfund Response Action Temporary Relocation Implementation Guidance and attachments.

or contact:

**Judy Smith, Community Involvement Coordinator, 503-326-6994, [smith.judy@epa.gov](mailto:smith.judy@epa.gov)**