

Zonolite/W.R. Grace

35 Industrial Drive, Hamilton Township, Mercer County

Citizen's Guide to the Public Health Consultation

March 2005

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) has released a Health Consultation on the Zonolite/W.R. Grace site. The Health Consultation evaluates actual and potential human exposures to contaminants measured at the site. This Citizen's Guide is a summary of the March 2005 Health Consultation. For a copy of the complete document please contact one of the agencies listed on the back of this Citizen's Guide.

Why is the Zonolite/W.R. Grace site of concern?

From 1948 to 1994, the Zonolite/W.R. Grace site was an exfoliation facility that processed approximately 350,000 tons of vermiculite ore from the mine in Libby, Montana. This vermiculite was contaminated with naturally occurring asbestos.

When exposed to very high temperatures, vermiculite exfoliates, or expands into worm-like pieces that are 8-12 times larger than the unheated mineral compound. The exfoliation process at the Zonolite/W.R. Grace site released more dust than other vermiculite processing methods. This dust contained asbestos fibers and was released inside the building. Operations also caused the exterior of the property to become contaminated.

Is there asbestos on the site?

On-site soil sampling demonstrated that there are elevated levels of asbestos present; however, soil with the highest levels of asbestos has been removed.

Who would have likely been exposed to this asbestos?

Former employees of the Zonolite/ W.R. Grace site were exposed to significant levels of Libby asbestos in the past during their employment. Household contacts of those employees may have been exposed to contamination brought home on clothes, hair, shoes and automobiles. Current on-site workers and building occupants at the site may be potentially exposed to contaminated soil and dust.

Could dust from Zonolite have affected nearby residents?

Local residents may have also been exposed to asbestos in the past from improper handling and waste disposal practices. Asbestos fibers may have been deposited in residential yards from the facility stack emissions. Currently, there are insufficient off-site sampling data to assess community exposure associated with this site.



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What actions are planned for this site?

The NJDHSS, in cooperation with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), will estimate potential asbestos concentrations in nearby residences using an air dispersion model to evaluate past and current community exposures.

The NJDHSS is conducting a health statistics review for asbestos related cancer and asbestosis (a chronic, degenerative lung disease) in the communities near the Zonolite/W.R. Grace site.

The USEPA has removed much of the asbestos contaminated soils from the Zonolite/W.R. Grace site, and conducted personal and ambient air monitoring during removal activities and engineering controls during cleanup activities. Additional sampling of air in the former processing facility is planned, as is further evaluation of soil.

Where can I get more information about this site or a copy of the document?

Copies of this report are available at the following locations:

in Hamilton Township:

Hamilton Township Library, White Horse Mercerville Road;
Hamilton Twp. Health Department, Greenwood Avenue

in Lawrence Township:

Mercer County Library- Lawrence Twp. Branch, Darrah Lane;
Lawrence Twp. Health Department, Municipal Bldg, Rt. 206;

in Trenton:

Trenton Library, Academy Street
Trenton Health Department, City Hall, E. State St.

from the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services:

Consumer and Environmental Health Services

(609) 584-5367

or on our web site at

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/eoh/cehsweb/index.html> (see “What’s New”)

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