

May 24, 2016

For several years now, GSA building managers and environmental specialists have been working to better evaluate the environmental conditions at the Federal Center. As our evaluations continue, we will be sharing information directly with all interested parties on our website: www.gsa.gov/goodfellow

A reading room containing reports and records of environmental studies from 2002-2016 is available from 6:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. in Building 107. Additionally, these resources are available online at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/212361>.

If you would like to continue receiving updates from GSA's Environmental Team, please add your email address to our distribution list: [Federal Center Email Sign-Up](#)



Federal Center Environmental Conditions

The existence of contaminants at the Federal Center stems from building materials (asbestos tile, lead-based paint, etc.) used during its construction and early ammunition manufacturing processes starting in 1941. This complex is a WWII vintage Army Ammunition Plant that was converted to office space beginning in 1966. Contamination is a legacy issue where the term “legacy” refers to hazardous substances manufactured and put into use before the enactment of modern federal and state environmental laws.

GSA sampling has shown the soil in the basement crawl space beneath some of the buildings contains varying amounts of asbestos, organic chemicals (collectively known as PAHs¹, VOC's², and SVOC's³), and heavy metals. Lead dust is also present in isolated areas of the buildings.

Air samples collected within occupied areas of the buildings have thus far shown asbestos and lead below laboratory detection limits and have not posed exposure concerns for occupants.

GSA conducted mercury vapor sampling last year in the basement, basement tunnels, and crawl spaces in buildings 102E, 103A, 103B, 103C, 103D, 103E, and 103F. Two of the 27 results came back at 1 micro gram per cubic meter of air (ug/m³) -- below the industry acceptable standard of to 25 ug/m³. The rest of the results were non-detect, or below the testing limitations of 0.005 ug.

Earlier this year, GSA contracted with Occu-Tec to conduct Asbestos Air, Lead Air, and Lead Dust sampling. The report results were:

- Asbestos and Lead air samples collected in all buildings were below the laboratory detection limit. This includes tenant spaces, basements, basement tunnels, and crawl spaces.
- Wipe samples for lead dust indicate tenant work spaces are safe for occupancy. However, lead dust was detected in isolated areas in occupied space and in the basement, mechanical areas, and the space above ceiling tiles. This is consistent with prior environmental reports. Access to these spaces are controlled and require an approved job specific safety plan to protect the safety of employees and occupants.

OSHA is conducting their own sampling in occupied spaces independent of GSA to assess the situation. Those results will be shared as they become available.

What's happening now?

Building managers implemented controls where contaminants exist, including:

- Contractors (construction, maintenance, inspection, etc.) working in the basements, basement tunnels, crawl spaces, or directly involving the soil in crawl spaces have been directed to take necessary precautions to ensure employees are protected from potential exposure to these contaminants. Contract modifications have been issued to ensure OSHA compliance. GSA is also coordinating with tenants who have contracts in the building to ensure their contracts incorporate the same requirements.
- Contractors (construction, maintenance, inspection, etc.) performing demolition or work above ceilings in

occupied areas of the buildings have been directed to take precautions to avoid disturbance of lead dust; and, if such disturbance is necessary, the contractor shall utilize methods to control and contain any lead dust. Demolition involving lead-painted materials and/or surfaces containing lead dust contamination will include lead abatement and special waste management and disposal as appropriate.

- Contractors have been directed to perform hazard assessments of the tasks they will be performing in the space. Contractors are required to submit a safety plan which protects their employees and building occupants from exposure to contaminants for any task that has the potential to disturb contaminants. All entrances into basements, utility tunnels and crawl spaces are locked and have posted signage indicating that unauthorized personnel should stay out. Entrances to penthouses and mechanical rooms are also locked, and signage has been posted indicating that unauthorized personnel should stay out.
- Mercury testing conducted in 2015 revealed levels at or below detection limits in buildings 102E, 103A, 103B, 103C, 103D, 103E, and 103F. Additional mercury testing will be conducted in other buildings.
- Tenants were made aware of their responsibility to submit their Site Specific Safety Plan, referred to as "SSSPs," to GSA for all tenant employees who will need to access the basements, basement tunnels and crawl spaces.
- All GSA employees whose job description are required entering the basements, basement tunnels, and crawl spaces are trained in the GSA SSSP and are required to utilize task appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

In addition to implementing these recommendations, GSA has assigned a project manager to oversee activities at the Federal Center and is hiring a full-time Industrial Hygienist to consult with on circumstances specific to this complex. GSA has also contacted the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) with a request to further evaluate potential health hazards.

A remedial investigation (RI) study for the entire complex will be conducted this summer. The initial RI study will help to characterize environmental conditions in the soil and groundwater.

Is there anything I should be doing?

GSA considers work spaces at the Federal Center safe as long as all safety protocols are complied with and controls remain in place. Tenants should contact GSA building managers immediately if a ceiling tile is found missing or out-of-place. The GSA field office main number is [\(314\) 263-3001](tel:3142633001). You may also call Building Managers Tara VanBibber, [\(314\) 263-3002](tel:3142633002), or Larry O'Neill, [\(314\) 263-3056](tel:3142633056), directly.

We are currently working with our contracted service providers to institute new ceiling tile installation procedures and replace any down tiles. Temporary barriers will be put in place until the new procedures are fully implemented and the tiles are replaced according to safety protocols.

In April, air samples were collected in every occupied building at the complex. All samples indicated a non-detect level for both lead and asbestos. OSHA also sampled for lead and asbestos in the air in the occupied spaces of buildings 103, 104, and 105 -- with no detection. At this time, there is no reason to believe lead is in the air during normal building operations, including in spaces with missing tiles.

If you are concerned about potential exposure or are experiencing health concerns you think may be caused by potential exposure, please contact your supervisor or agency-designated point of contact. Individual health matters must be handled internally through your employer. Additional information about a NIOSH health evaluation will be shared as it becomes available.

Where can I find additional information?

GSA will post all relevant information to our [website](#) and [reading rooms](#). Those interested in receiving future updates regarding environmental studies and the Federal Center should [register for our distribution list](#). In the coming days, GSA will provide more information on sampling results, potential NIOSH screenings, and controls in place at the Federal Center.

Thank you,

GSA Region 6 Environmental Team