

Hunters Point Shipyard

Historical Radiological Assessment Available for Public Review



Fact Sheet No. 5 February 2004

The Navy has made a commitment to keep the local community, Hunters Point Shipyard tenants, and federal, state and local regulators informed during preparation of the Historical Radiological Assessment.

INTRODUCTION

The Navy has completed the Draft Final "Historical Radiological Assessment" (HRA) for Hunters Point Shipyard (HPS). The Draft Final HRA is now available to members of the public for review (see below).

The Navy Radiological Affairs Support Office (RASO) conducted extensive research on past radiological activities using both federal and personal historical archives. This research was supplemented by interviewing people who knew of radiological operations at HPS.

This fact sheet is about the HRA in general, the structure of the report, research methodology, findings and how you can comment on the work the Navy has done. This is the fifth fact sheet in a series designed to keep the community informed about progress made in the development of a comprehensive and accurate HRA. This fact sheet also describes activities that will follow the final HRA, as well as contact information for the project. A list of technical terms and definitions is provided on the next page.

The Draft Final Hunters Point Shipyard Historical Radiological Assessment is now available for public review at the following locations:

City of San Francisco Main Library

Science, Technical and Government Documents Room
100 Larkin Street
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-557-4500 x5075

Bayview / Anna E. Waden Branch Library

5075 Third Street
San Francisco, CA 94124
415-715-4100

Public Comment Period

Comments on the Draft Final HRA are welcome and may be submitted to the Navy between February 27 and April 27, 2004. Please mail or e-mail your comments to the contact named on the back page of this fact sheet.

HRA Information Day

In addition to publishing this fact sheet, the Navy is holding an Information Day for the public to learn more about the purpose, content and findings of the Draft Final HRA. This open house will be held so you may speak with project staff members at your convenience and visit information booths.

March 20, 2004
11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Earl P. Mills Auditorium
100 Whitney Young Circle
San Francisco, CA 94124

Keeping the Community Informed

DEFINITIONS

CERCLA – Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act, sometimes referred to as the “Superfund” act. The regulations that govern the cleanup of sites that may contain hazardous materials.

EPA – U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

G-RAM – general radioactive materials.

HPS – Hunters Point Shipyard.

HRA – historical radiological assessment.

Impacted site – a site where there is the possibility that radioactive materials may have been used, stored or disposed.

Naval Radiological Defense Laboratory (NRDL) (1948-1969) – a former Navy organization at Hunters Point Shipyard whose mission was the study of the effects of atomic weapons and the development of ways to protect Navy personnel and ships.

Non-impacted site – a site where there is no reasonable possibility that radioactive materials are present.

Operation Crossroads – two separate atomic weapons tests conducted in the summer of 1946 at Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific, which resulted in the radiological contamination of Navy ships and submarines.

Radiation Laboratory (1946-1948) – a former Navy organization that assessed the types and levels of radiation on ships associated with Operation Crossroads, the development of decontamination methods, personnel protection and detection instrumentation. Its name changed to the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratory in 1948 when its mission expanded to include research of effects of radiation.

Radiological Affairs Support Office (RASO) – a current division of the Navy that provides technical support in the identification, characterization and cleanup of radioactive materials.

Radiological investigation – a systematic examination of an area for the purpose of determining if radioactive materials are present and, if so, at what levels.

Radioactive material – a substance that contains or emits radiation.

Radioluminescent devices – items such as gauges, dials, watches and ship’s deck markers that contained a paint mixed with radium or other radionuclides to make them visible in the dark.

Radionuclide – a naturally occurring or man-made particle that emits radiation.

About the HRA

During the preparation of the HRA, the Navy studied past radiological operations that introduced general radioactive material or “G-RAM” to HPS, including shipyard operations and research conducted by the Radiation Laboratory (“Rad Lab”) and its successor, the Naval Radiological Defense Laboratory (NRDL). These operations included the handling and refurbishment of radioluminescent devices (such as gauges, dials, watches and ship’s deck markers), decontamination of Operation Crossroads ships, development and calibration of radiation survey instruments, and radiological experimentation. The HRA also includes results of previous radiological investigations conducted at HPS and recommendations for future actions at impacted sites. The Navy conducted the HRA as part of a program to investigate and clean up residual radioactive materials that may remain at HPS from past activities.

The federal law for environmental cleanup at HPS is the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), which defines radionuclides — particles that emit radiation — as “hazardous substances.” Under CERCLA, releases of hazardous substances must be investigated, characterized and cleaned up. To help meet this goal, the HRA:

- ◆ summarizes historical information about radiological operations, investigations and surveys;
- ◆ identifies potential, likely or known sources of radioactive material and areas of use;
- ◆ classifies sites as impacted or non-impacted by radiological operations;
- ◆ assesses the likelihood of radioactive material to migrate from an impacted site;
- ◆ identifies sites that need further action; and
- ◆ recommends the type of future actions necessary for unrestricted release of impacted sites.

To date, only low-level radioactive materials have been found at HPS and the public and the environment are safe.

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How the HRA Is Organized

The Draft Final HRA describes the shipyard's environmental setting, which includes the nearby community, land use and sensitive areas. It explains the past use of G-RAM at the shipyard and the specific areas where it was used. The report also tells how and why the HRA was performed, describes the federal guidelines followed, and details previous radiological investigations and their findings. In addition, it describes the historical and current involvement of government agencies in shipyard activities.

The report contains 10 sections, 4 appendices, a list of acronyms and a glossary. The Executive Summary at the beginning of the report provides an overview of the entire document in several pages; tables provide at-a-glance information. Section 8.0 provides a summary of the findings (including details about each site, its former uses, radionuclides of concern, previous investigations, and locations of possible contamination, as well as recommendations for future action).

What the HRA Says

The primary goal of the HRA is to identify sites that are "impacted" by past radiological activities. An impacted site is one that has the *potential* for radioactive materials to be present and may require further action. Impacted sites may include:

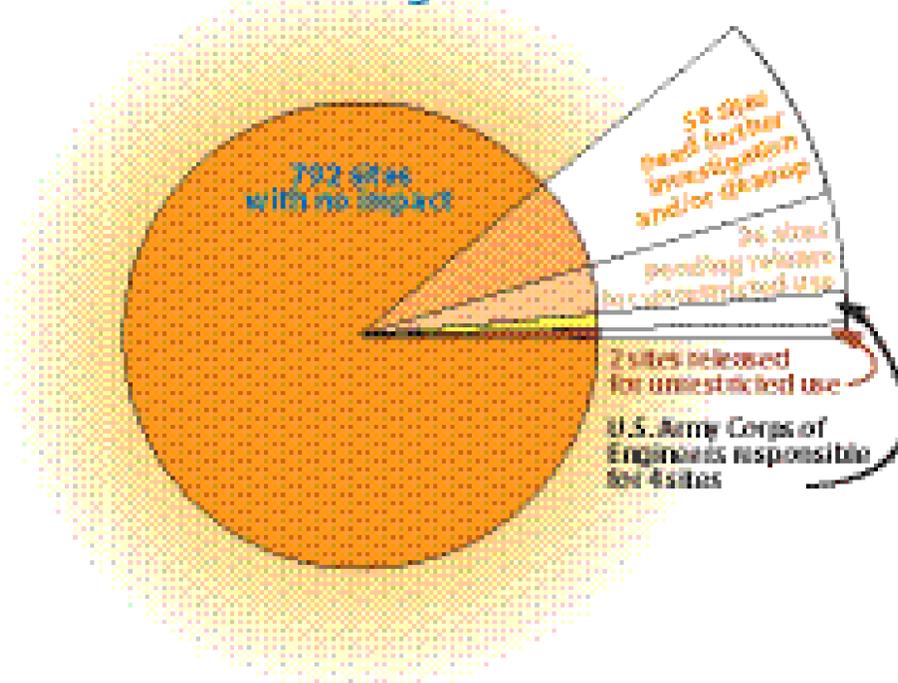
- ◆ sites where radioactive materials were used or stored;
- ◆ sites where known spills, discharges or other unusual occurrences involving radioactive materials have occurred, or may have occurred, that could have resulted in the spread of radioactive materials; and
- ◆ sites where radioactive materials might have been disposed or buried.

A non-impacted site is one where, based on historical information or results from previous investigations, there is

no reasonable possibility that radioactive materials are present.

The HRA assessed a total of 882 sites where G-RAM may have been used, stored or disposed in the past. Of these, 90 sites were identified as *impacted* to some degree with the remaining sites being *non-impacted*. Of the 90 impacted sites, 26 have already been investigated. Fifty-eight impacted sites will require further investigation and/or cleanup.

HRA Findings: 882 Sites Assessed



Of the remaining six sites, the California Department of Health Services and RASO have released two for unrestricted use, and the Army Corps of Engineers has taken responsibility for further investigating the other four.

What Happens Next

The sites identified in the HRA will progress through a series of investigations or surveys. Some will require cleanup actions; some will not. During any investigation or cleanup action, the Navy will ensure that the public and the environment are safe. All work will follow current health and safety standards established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the California Department of Health Services. These efforts will result in the thorough identification and removal of residual

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radioactive materials at HPS.

Future fact sheets will be issued to report on the radiological investigations and any cleanup actions found necessary. After sites are investigated or cleaned up, EPA and the California Department of Health Services will determine whether the site is ready for unrestricted use.

How to Submit Comments on the Draft Final HRA

In order to produce the highest quality Final HRA, the Navy encourages the public's input on the report. To make your comments the most useful, the following guide is provided.

1. Include the page, paragraph and sentence you are commenting on.

For example, you might write, "On page 2, section 4, paragraph 5, sentence 3, the description of uses at Building ## ..."

2. Provide a suggestion for improvement.

Let us know specifically how you would improve the document.

3. Submit your comments on the Draft Final HRA to the Navy before the comment period closes.

Letters and postcards must be mailed to Mr. Keith Forman (see address at right) and postmarked no later than April 27, 2004, to be considered. You may also send your comments in an e-mail to: keith.s.forman@navy.mil as late as midnight (Pacific Standard Time) on April 27, 2004.

4. Provide your name and full mailing or e-mail address if you wish to receive a direct response from the Navy.

The Navy will personally respond to all commenters.

All comments will be compiled and responded to in a formal Response to Comments document that will be released within 45 days of the closing of the comment period. This document will be made available to the public at the two information repository locations (see front page).

WHERE TO GET INFORMATION

The Draft Final HRA is available at the two locations named on the front page. The public is invited to read all Navy reports and other documents about the environmental program at HPS. The Main Library in downtown San Francisco contains a record of most documents related to the Navy's work at HPS. The Bayview / Anna E. Waden Branch Library contains a smaller collection of documents and copies of current investigation reports and historical documents related to the HRA. The HRA will also be posted on the Navy's Hunters Point Shipyard Web site.

SEND YOUR COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT FINAL HRA TO:

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Naval Facilities Engineering Command
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