

HUNTERS POINT SHIPYARD PARCEL B SANDBLAST GRIT FACT SHEET



June 19, 2001

The Navy is providing this update to keep the local community, Shipyard tenants, and Federal, State, and local officials informed of the status of actions being taken at the Parcel B cleanup site on Hunters Point Shipyard. The Navy will continue to provide updates as new information becomes available. This fact sheet contains information on the following issues:

- ✓ General Overview/Summary
- ✓ Brief History of Radiological Studies at Parcel B
- ✓ Current Sandblast Grit Radiological Results
- ✓ Future Actions

GENERAL OVERVIEW/SUMMARY

During cleanup of a portion of Parcel B known as Installation Restoration (IR) Site 7 (IR-07), a layer of sandblast grit material was identified. Based on historical knowledge of the site, the Navy directed contractors to take field measurements of the material for low-level radioactivity, then proceed with follow-up samples for a more detailed laboratory analysis. All field measurements confirmed that the sandblast grit material did not contain radioactivity above natural background levels for the Shipyard. EPA further confirmed the field results during their independent survey of the site on June 5, 2001. Initial laboratory analysis results had led the Navy to believe that elevated radium levels existed in the grit despite the low survey results; however, recent followup analyses have identified that no elevated levels were present. Therefore, there has been no health threat from the sandblast grit being excavated from Parcel B to either the on-site workers, tenants, or local community.

BRIEF HISTORY OF PREVIOUS RADIOLOGICAL STUDIES AT PARCEL B

The Navy conducted extensive radiological studies and investigations on Parcel B from 1988 through 1995. All phases of these investigations determined that there was no radioactivity above background readings in the IR-07 cleanup areas. During an excavation in IR-07 in 1999, sandblast grit was found in one of the areas. A sample of the material was sent for laboratory analysis, which confirmed that there was no elevated radioactivity in this material.

CURRENT SANDBLAST GRIT RADIOLOGICAL RESULTS

During excavation activities conducted on IR-07 of Parcel B this year, additional sandblast grit material was found. The Navy and its contractor were aware of the previous findings, but not knowing the specific type or previous usage of this sandblast grit, chose to re-verify the previous results. Field survey instruments did not detect radioactivity levels above naturally occurring background levels. Samples were collected and sent to the Navy contractor's laboratory for additional analyses to confirm field instrument measurements. Their preliminary laboratory analyses of IR-07 samples found radium-226 at levels higher than would have been expected based on the field survey instrument measurements. Elevated readings above background were not detected for any other radioisotope. Because of the differences in radium-226 results, the Navy suspended work at the site and conducted additional investigations. Additional steps were taken to verify the field and laboratory equipment results, and samples were sent to an independent laboratory for comparative analysis.

The independent laboratory's analysis reported radionuclide levels, including radium-226, that were consistent with the lower levels measured with the field equipment. Further investigation discovered an error in the recently upgraded computer software that the Navy contractor used to calculate the radioactivity in the samples. The error caused radium-226 levels to read about 100 times higher than the true levels of radium-226 in the sample. No other radioisotope results were affected by the error. The software developer has confirmed the error and is currently working to correct it. In the meantime, the Navy contractor has reanalyzed the samples using a previous version of the software, in addition to sending samples to an independent laboratory for analysis as a quality control measure.

Both the Navy contractor and the independent laboratory are completing analyses on 18 samples collected from Parcel B and from additional background areas. Each laboratory is conducting independent analyses on each of these samples. Results to date from the Navy contractor laboratory have identified radium-226 levels between 0.125 and 1.16 picocuries per gram (pCi/g) and the inde-

pendent laboratory has identified radium-226 levels between 0.168 and 0.436 pCi/g. These concentrations are consistent with the previously established radium-226 background levels in soil at Hunters Point, which range from 0.11 to 1.13 pCi/g. All of the Hunters Point sample results are well below the investigation action level for radium-226 of 5 pCi/g, per Federal regulations found in 40CFR192.12(a).

The Navy will provide a detailed report with a comparison of all sample results when the final data are received and validated.

Future Actions:

The Navy will be coordinating review of these results with the EPA and state regulatory agencies. Further, the Navy will continue to perform data quality control checks on all samples to ensure that valid sample results are provided to the regulatory agencies and the community. Once the results are validated, the sandblast grit will be transported off site for appropriate disposal. This will be followed by completion of the required excavations on the site.

For further information, please contact:

Mr. Richard G. Mach Jr., P.E.
BRAC Environmental Coordinator

Phone: (619) 532-0913

Cell Phone: (866) 281-5605

Fax: (619) 532-0995

E-mail: machrg@efdswnavfac.navy.mil

Mr. Tom Pinard

Public Affairs Officer

Phone: (650) 244-2707

Fax: (650) 244-2527

E-mail: pinardtc@efawestnavfac.navy.mil