

EPA hit on risks to health

By KATIE CAPERTON
DAILY NEWS WRITER

People who live in lower Manhattan complained to a federal investigator yesterday that their concerns about clean air and water near Ground Zero aren't being addressed.

They said nosebleeds and asthmalike symptoms have persisted, even though the World Trade Center fires are out and much of the dust has been cleared.

"This is chemical warfare against children," said Jenna Orkin, parent of a student at Stuyvesant High School, which is blocks from the Trade Center site.

Despite continuing complaints from neighbors, the Environmental Protection Agency has said repeatedly that tests show the fires and dust pose no long-term health risks.

But the agency's ombudsman, Robert Martin, has questioned those assurances. Martin and his staffers

"This is chemical warfare against children."

JENNA ORKIN

met with neighbors at a lawyer's office on Broadway as a first step in an investigation into whether the EPA responded adequately to the disaster.

"I cannot promise that [we] will bring you justice, but we will go the extra mile," said Hugh Kaufman, the ombudsman's chief investigator.

Maureen Silverman, who lives in Independence Plaza about four blocks from Ground Zero, told the ombudsman that around-the-clock rumbling from trucks clearing the twin towers site and dust from a debris barge in the Hudson River make life miserable.

"People can't sleep," she said.

Marjorie Clarke, an adjunct professor of environmental sciences at Hunter College, said she was shocked that people had been allowed to return to the area while the fires burned.

"They let people back in too soon," she said. "This is purely about the economic health of downtown."

Daily
News
2.2.02