

E.P.A. to Lead Cleanup Effort Of Homes Close to Ground Zero

Agency Reverses Policy 8 Months After Disaster

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NY Times

The federal Environmental Protection Agency will lead an effort to clean up and test apartments south of Canal Street in Lower Manhattan that were fouled by the dust and ash from the destruction of the World Trade Center, a person who was briefed on the plan said.

The cleanup plan is a sharp reversal in policy by the E.P.A. and the other government agencies that led the environmental response to the disaster. For months, despite criticism from politicians and residents who said that the government was shirking its responsibilities, the agency said indoor spaces were the province of owners and residents, not the government. So most people, if only to get on with their lives, followed that guidance and did the cleanup work themselves or hired others to do so.

Under the new plan, which is to be announced as early as today, any residents south of Canal Street will be able to call an E.P.A. number and have their apartments cleaned — for the first time, or again — at government expense, following guidelines established by the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration, said the person who had been told of the plan. The apartment's air would then be tested. The plan covers only residential spaces.

At least eight state, federal and city agencies, including the state and city health and environmental agencies, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the mayor's office, are expected to be involved. It could not be determined last night how responsibilities or costs might be divided, except that the E.P.A. would be in charge.

Dozens of questions swirl around what the policy will mean in practice. How many people will come forward and request a cleanup is perhaps the greatest unknown. How much each apartment may cost to clean is another.

About 20,000 people live within half a mile of the World Trade Center site alone. The American Lung Association has estimated that a professional cleanup typically costs about \$1.50 per square foot, or \$1,500 for a 1,000-square-foot apartment. Estimates for more involved cleanup work range even higher.

Public health experts have said they have little evidence to suggest that many apartments in Lower Manhattan are contaminated with asbestos or other materials that might have blown in through cracks or open windows when the twin towers fell on Sept. 11, or that the spaces have not been adequately cleaned up

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Government to Clean Up Residences Fouled on 9/11

The E.P.A. is said to be set to lead a federal effort to clean up and test apartments south of Canal Street in Lower Manhattan that were fouled by dust and ash from the destruction of the World Trade Center. The move would reverse a position that indoor spaces were the province of their owners, not the government. A1

Workers took the first step in erecting a new skyscraper on the site where 7 World Trade Center stood. B1

Skakel Murder Trial Under Way

A prosecutor told jurors in opening arguments that Michael C. Skakel had repeatedly confessed to killing Martha Moxley in 1975. Mr. Skakel's lawyer said the state would not be able to prove even a circumstantial case against his client. B1

Action on Adult Homes

The Pataki administration issued an array of initiatives to begin reshaping the system of care and oversight for thousands of mentally ill people living in adult homes, where lax regulation has led to abuse of residents. B1

DINING

F1-12

SPORTS

D1-8

Fabled Racehorse Dies

Seattle Slew, the last living Triple Crown champion, died in his sleep at the age of 28 — exactly 25 years after his Kentucky Derby victory. D1

OBITUARIES

C16

— ABOUT \$50 BILLION WAS EXTRACTED from this state. Those who claimed that there was no price manipulation here were just plain wrong. ”

GOV. GRAY DAVIS
of California after the release of documents describing how Enron trading practices pushed up prices for power in the state. [A1].

BUSINESS DAY

C1-15

Enron Files Called Smoking Gun

Politicians, lawyers and consumer groups said documents showing that Enron had manipulated California's electric-power market were invaluable to their quest to recover billions of dollars that the state was overcharged in 2000 and 2001. A1

The Fed Stands Pat on Rates

The Fed voted unanimously to hold its benchmark interest rate unchanged, saying the durability of the economic recovery remained uncertain despite a sharp upturn in first-quarter growth and a surge in productivity. C1

The S. & P. 500 slid 3.18 points, to 1,049.49, its lowest level since Oct. 1. The Dow advanced 28.51 points, to 9,836.55, while the Nasdaq, already down 19 percent this year, fell 4.66 points, to 1,573.82. C10

Good Quarter for Cisco

The leading maker of Internet networking equipment reported profits for its fiscal third quarter that were better than expected, as belt-tightening, lower costs for parts and a slight rise in sales helped reverse a steep loss a year before. C1

Business Digest

C1

World Business

E.P.A. to Lead Indoor Cleanup Near Collapse

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in the intervening months.

Extensive testing of outdoor air in the neighborhoods and business areas downtown has for the most part shown little cause for any long-term health concerns.

But because relatively few indoor spaces have been tested, public health experts and disaster administrators, not to mention residents, also really do not know what the state of indoor air quality is. Some public health experts who had the plans described to them said a central question is whether the new policy, coming nearly eight months after the attack, has already missed its opportunity.

"Our worry is that this proposal is coming too late in the game," said Peter Iwanowicz, director of environmental health at the American Lung Association of New York State. Mr. Iwanowicz said he had no reason to believe that residents should be alarmed by the change in policy. But the fact is, he said, people have not had enough information to assess their own risks, unless they have had the resources and inclination to have

their air tested.

"Rather than doing this in the first couple of months, when it should have been done, people have been living and working in these spaces," Mr. Iwanowicz said.

But one public official who became a particularly sharp critic of the government's response, Representative Jerrold Nadler of New York, said last night that he thought the policy was a huge step forward and should reassure residents that their health and welfare would be taken care of.

"It's good that they're doing this," he said. "We'll watch that they do it right, but it's a major step forward."

A spokeswoman for the E.P.A., Bonnie Bellow, declined to comment last night.

In general, public health experts have divided the population of people who were potentially exposed to contaminants from the trade center into two main groups: those who worked or volunteered at ground zero and everyone else.

Ground zero workers, especially those who did not wear proper respiratory protection, are considered the most exposed because they were in the midst of the dust that blew

around the site and the smoke from the fires that burned for more than three months after the attack.

Physicians who have treated people with respiratory complaints say that although some downtown office workers and residents have had severe reactions — mostly short-term irritation of their lungs and throats — the numbers are relatively low.

One physician who has treated many people with World Trade Center-related illnesses, Dr. Stephen M. Levin of the Mount Sinai School of Medicine, said at a conference last month in Manhattan that he believed that few residents should be alarmed about their increased risk of long-term illness from the disaster.

But in dozens of interviews with residents over the last eight months, questions have continued to resonate about how clean is clean. Among the issues that will probably emerge under the new cleanup policy is whether residents will consider a building clean if only some of the apartments, but not all, participate in the E.P.A. program since dust, as anyone who has ever wielded a broom can attest, tends to move around, tracked from place to place.

very much unequal.

that they wanted beautified. The city's budget shortfall was also an issue. But the Tulsa youths expressed little personal fear of violence from gangs or drug dealers.

In Newark, where a mayor will be elected next week, students live in a much poorer and more violent community. Here young people tell a very different story. At Technology High School, for example, Tariq Raheem teaches history to seniors who have concluded that the chief election issues should be gang violence, police corruption and the presence of drug dealers on the street.

In a walk around the city, Mr. Raheem's students observed strewn crack vials. In class discussions, they complained of living in fear that they would be shot if they wore clothing that by chance matched a gang's color, or if they merely went outside in the evening. Those fears were palpable during a student panel's recent interviewing of the candidates, to be broadcast at 6:30 p.m. tomorrow by NJN, New Jersey's public television service. (A student discussion of the issues will be broadcast on WBGO-FM [88.3], Newark public radio, at 8 p.m. on Monday.)

those topics also concerned, directly or indirectly, the effects of crime and gangs. Mr. Raheem described how community policing might work, and asked if students thought it would help. Some deemed it reasonable, but one young woman objected to having police officers live in neighborhoods they patrol; she said a policeman who lived in her community was its biggest drug dealer.

In a city with an exceptionally high dropout rate — 40 percent is a good estimate — that Mr. Raheem's students have reached senior year defines them as among those with the most perseverance and talent. Even so, he has had to spend one class period a week, all year, trying to convince them their future would brighten if they attended college; most never before considered the idea.

Mr. Raheem says roughly half his students are going on to college in the fall. Still, attrition rates there are high among students who come from communities characterized by violence, unemployment and poverty.

In a number of cities, the Annenberg Center's two-year-old project, Student Voices, has improved teenagers' civic awareness and attitudes toward political involvement, and sharpened the desire of many to participate in public affairs as adults. These are hopeful signs, though there is no hard evidence that such student attitudes actually lead to political participation later in life.

center of a controversy as a private developer of power plants, TransGas Energy Systems, has proposed that it be converted into a power plant.

At the end of the five-month workshop, the students are expected to have developed a proposal for the site illustrated by maps detailing everything from the placement of buildings and landscaping to a pedestrian and vehicular access plan.

The idea is not just to understand real estate. The students are applying important mathematical concepts as well as learning about design, graphics and photography. They are also familiarizing themselves with the city's political structure, polishing their public speaking skills and learning to work in groups.

The workshop is an example of the increasing use of practical projects, not just to prepare students for the world of real work but to stretch the boundaries of their imagination beyond the jobs held by the people they see every day. Often these projects are shepherded by corporations or nonprofit groups that have immersed themselves in the troubled New York City school system in ways that were not the case a generation ago.

The mock development program at I.S. 71 is the brainchild of Michael Johnson, an M.I.T. club member and a former urban planner who works in financing for the New York City Economic Development Corporation.