

Q. Lately, I've been seeing men dressed in big white suits on the rooftops of various buildings around Lower Manhattan. What are they doing? [INSERT NYC DEP CLEANUP PHOTOS]

A. The men you're seeing have been contracted by New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) to remove the debris from the WTC collapse that accumulated on building surfaces, including rooftops, façades, fire escapes, and canopies. This work is part of the **Exterior Building Cleanup Program** under which NYC DEP identified buildings within **[INSERT MILE-RADIUS]** (be consistent, Canal Street River to River. Important! Use the mileage # rather than mentioning specific streets) of the WTC site that had visible accumulations of debris, contacted building owners to ask permission to clean the debris and test it for the presence of asbestos, and began cleaning buildings whose owners gave licensed agreements. The program's cost is being covered by FEMA.

The exterior of each building designated for cleanup is being vacuumed with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter vacuum, wet wiped, and given a final wash. An independent contractor is conducting air monitoring to ensure that the cleanup work does not cause re-suspension of WTC dust in the air. The program started on June 3 and is expected to be completed by October 31, 2002.

Although the men are wearing protective suits, there is no need to be concerned about the cleanup process – you don't need to be wearing this type of clothing when you're in their vicinity. They wear this gear because they are potentially exposed to hazardous material daily over the course of their work lives.

[Insert quote from reputable source about how the Exterior Building Cleanup Program is part of an effort to reassure the public that air quality in lower Manhattan is, and will continue to be, safe for residents, workers and visitors.]

For more information about the Exterior Building Cleanup Program, visit NYC DEP's Web site or call (718) DEP-HELP.

Q. I received a flyer in the mail a while ago about apartment cleaning, but have no idea what it entails, if it's still going on, or if I'm even eligible. Can you tell me more about this?

A. The flyer you received was sent to 38,000 residents in Lower Manhattan, and announced a residential dust cleanup program being conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency.

The program offers the opportunity to 1) request your apartment be professionally cleaned and then tested for asbestos (if asbestos is still present, your home will be re-cleaned) or 2) that your residence be first tested for asbestos without professional

cleaning. If – and only if – asbestos is found during testing, you may ask that your residence be professionally cleaned. **The deadline for the request is October 2, 2002.**

Eligibility: Residents living in the area south of Canal, Allen, and Pike Streets whose homes accumulated dust and debris from the collapse of the WTC can request cleaning and/or testing.

[Insert quote from reputable source about purpose and goal of this program]

For more information or to request assistance, visit EPA's Web site or call the cleanup hotline at 1-877-796-5471.

Q. I keep hearing about HEPA filters. All my neighbors are purchasing one. What is it and should I buy one?

A. If your home has accumulated dust and debris from the WTC collapse, it's probably a good idea to purchase a HEPA (high efficiency particulate air) filter – especially because FEMA will reimburse your purchase (just call 1-800-462-9029).

HEPA is a special filter that is attached to a vacuum cleaner. A vacuum with a HEPA filter captures tiny particles of dust that would pass through a regular vacuum. For instance, asbestos fibers, which can be very small, are trapped by the HEPA filter so they are not re-suspended in the air.

Q. I called FEMA about a question regarding air quality, and they referred me to EPA who ultimately referred me to NYC DEP. I'm a little confused about who is responsible for what. Do you have any guidance?

A. No doubt it can be confusing dealing with city, state, and federal agencies – especially with questions regarding 9-11. Here's a guide of commonly referred to agencies and their responsibilities regarding air quality, cleanup, health, mental health, and reimbursement.

- **American Red Cross (ARC)** – Mental health therapy; replacement reimbursement (Let's check with our friends at EPA)
- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)** – Interior residential cleanup; indoor air sampling
- **New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP)** – Air quality; exterior building cleanup
- **New York Police Department (NYPD)** – Security issues
- **New York State Department of Health (NYS DOH)** – Health and mental health issues; health services available to those affected by WTC collapse; information on mold
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)** – Reimbursement for purchase of a HEPA filter vacuum, air conditioners, and air purifiers

[QUESTION: Who else should be included here?]

Many independent doctors and health experts, as well as federal, state, and city agencies agree that there is very little risk of health problems as a result of the WTC cleanup efforts.

Q. I've been hearing a lot about asbestos – how it may be in my apartment, in the air. Since I live near Ground Zero, should I be doing something?

A. There is little reason to be concerned about health risks relating to asbestos. Asbestos only becomes a problem when it is airborne, and to date, air samples taken by EPA and independent contractors have not shown any worrisome elevated asbestos levels. (We did have a few spikes – but nothing of concern or unanticipated)

Scientists agree that even elevated levels of asbestos do not necessarily pose an immediate health threat. Asbestos exposure becomes a health concern when high concentrations of asbestos fibers are inhaled over a long period of time. Illness is very unlikely to result from a single, high-level exposure, or from short periods of low-level exposure.

Despite the low risk of asbestos contamination, NYC DEP is ~~testing for asbestos in~~ cleaning any WTC debris found during the exterior building cleanup program, and EPA is testing for asbestos in residential buildings. **If you are concerned about asbestos in your apartment, you should take advantage of the EPA's internal cleanup program and request your apartment be cleaned and/or tested. [Insert link to feature story.]**

Q. As a parent, I can't help but worry about my child's health. Every time she goes to the park and puts dirt or sand in her mouth, I get nervous that she's ingesting something toxic. I also am concerned about the indoor air quality in her school. What efforts have been done to address parents' concerns?

A. From October 4, 2001, to June 30, 2002, the New York Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) worked with several New York City agencies, including the Board of Education, to provide air monitoring in and around the schools near the World Trade Center disaster site. Air samples did not show harmful asbestos levels outside of the main entrances to four Lower Manhattan schools: Stuyvesant High School, IS/PS 89, PS 234, and the High School of Economics and Finance.

Additionally, EPA has used its HEPA filter SUPERVAC vacuum trucks to clean Lower Manhattan area parks, playgrounds, and even children's sandboxes. **[NEED INFO ON SCHOOL AND PLAYGROUND CLEANUP/TESTING]**

[TK: THIRD PARTY Q&A OR STORY]

CLEANUP

This section provides an update of the exterior and interior cleaning processes conducted by the city and governmental agencies.

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Article on Residential Dust Cleanup

Frequently Asked Questions about Dust Cleanup Program [Link to EPA's Web site]

Timeline of Exterior Building Cleanup Program

Important Numbers

[Insert Feature Story from Sub Home Page]

[THE FOLLOWING SHOULD BE IN A TEXT BOX]

For additional questions regarding the EPA Residential Dust Cleanup Program, visit the EPA's Web site for Frequently Asked Questions.

Status of Exterior Cleanup Efforts* [To be put in a chart] [NOTE: THIS NEEDS TO BE CHECKED TO MAKE SURE ALL NUMBERS ARE UP-TO-DATE AT TIME OF WEB SITE LAUNCH]

- June 6, 3 2002 – Exterior Cleanup Program begins
- Number of buildings surveyed – 1054
- Number of buildings without debris on exterior surfaces – 747
- Number of buildings with debris on exterior surfaces – 307
- Number of license agreements received from building owners – 152
- Number of buildings cleaned by NYDEP contractors – 105
- Buildings cleaned by the building owner and re-inspected by DEP to confirm absence of debris – 70
- October 30, 31, 2002 – Exterior Cleanup Program expected to be completed

*Most recent data available

Important Numbers [text boxes throughout section]

For information and answers to questions on environmental conditions in Lower Manhattan, please call the **Lower Manhattan Air Quality Hotline** at (212) 221-8635 from 11:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

To request cleanup and/or testing for your residence or business, sign up on the EPA's WTC Web site or call the WTC toll-free hotline at 1-877-796-5471.