

Avaltroni, Robert

From: Avaltroni, Robert
Sent: Wednesday, November 06, 2002 3:55 PM
To: 'Jonathan.Hotz@edelman.com'
Subject: Downtown Cleanup



NYC DEP Completes
Downtown Cle...

Please find attached. With just a minor change, it's fine with me. Thank you for all your hard work in presenting us. Please send me your final copy for our files.

Regards,

Bob

NYC DEP Completes Downtown Cleanup

By November 30, 2002, the New York City Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) will officially wrap up a six-month effort to remove potentially hazardous dust and debris that had accumulated on the roofs, windows and facades of downtown buildings following the World Trade Center (WTC) collapse. The project has been both a feat of labor and logistics with DEP crews working around the clock and making every accommodation possible to minimize disruptions to area residents, businesses and institutions as they clean more than 1.8 million [CONFIRM] square feet of exterior building space.

Beginning in January 2002, the DEP set about inspecting buildings in Lower Manhattan for exterior residue containing more than 1 percent of asbestos, the threshold amount set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the U.S. Department of Labor, New York State and the DEP. In a small sample of downtown buildings in close proximity to the WTC site, 48 percent tested positive for asbestos contamination, prompting the DEP to commence a comprehensive inspection of the more than one thousand buildings in the area.

"There was a great degree of anxiety among people in Lower Manhattan," said Robert Avaltroni, Deputy Commissioner of the DEP. "We felt that we needed to act quickly to relieve that anxiety in order to help people who live and work in the area move forward with their lives."

~~When the full inspection was complete, the DEP found the problem to be somewhat smaller than preliminary tests had suggested. Of the 1,072 buildings the DEP inspected, 326 – less than 30 percent – were found to have asbestos-contaminated WTC debris and were earmarked for cleaning.~~

The DEP inspected 1,072 buildings of which 326 – less than 30 percent – were found to have some form of asbestos-contaminated WTC debris and were earmarked for cleaning. While many were below possible detection levels, DEP made a decision to have all 326 buildings cleaned intent on providing positive reinforcement for all lower Manhattan residents.

The DEP conducted outreach to the owners of the affected buildings to notify them of the need for cleanup, giving them the option to have the work done by the DEP or through an independent contractor of their own choosing. The owners of 100 buildings elected to have their buildings cleaned independently. The DEP later re-inspected these buildings and certified that asbestos-containing material had been removed.

DEP cleanup crews went into action beginning June 3 and worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week with the exception of major holidays and days when inclement weather made cleaning unsafe. To date, DEP contractors have cleaned 190 buildings totaling 1,8XX,XXX [CONFIRM] square feet of building exterior space. The DEP has worked closely with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and the EPA throughout the process of inspection, cleanup and re-inspection.

"We went into every crevice and every corner of the buildings we cleaned," said Avaltroni. "Wherever we saw debris, we removed it."