

EPA Region 2 World Trade Center Emergency Response Activities to Date
September 18, 2001

Since the day of the World Trade Center disaster, EPA Emergency Response personnel have worked closely with state and local officials as well as other federal agencies to ensure the safety of rescue workers and surrounding population. EPA has assisted numerous financial firms in gaining access to their buildings and returning to operation.

The activities include:

- **Continuous air monitoring:** EPA has set up ten continuous air monitors in and around "ground zero," and is testing samples for the presence of asbestos, VOCs, lead and dioxin. The majority of sample results thus far indicate that asbestos levels are below levels of concern. The highest levels came from a monitor located one-half block from ground zero, demonstrating the need for rescuers to wear appropriate protective gear. We are awaiting other results.
- **Outdoor air sampling:** Before establishing the continuous air monitoring stations, EPA took daily air samples from a number of locations in lower Manhattan, as well as in western Brooklyn and Liberty State Park in New Jersey. 50 air samples were taken, a vast majority again showing levels of asbestos and other chemicals below EPA's threshold of concern. In fact, in most cases, asbestos was not detected.
- **Indoor air sampling:** EPA took 13 samples of indoor air in two federal buildings last week, and again all samples showed asbestos levels that were well below levels of concern. These buildings are likely to be good indicators of asbestos levels in sound buildings in the area of the disaster. EPA also reviewed data from an environmental company hired by the New York Stock Exchange to inspect its building prior to the reopening on Monday, Sept. 17. Data from the Stock Exchange also showed no levels of concern.
- **Dust Sampling:** EPA has taken 62 samples of dust in and around ground zero, including in the financial district. Most of these samples were below EPA's definition of asbestos containing material (1% asbestos). Where samples were shown to have greater than 1% asbestos - numbers ranged from 1.1 to 4.5% - EPA has vacuumed up the dust using special trucks and has re-sampled.
- **Vacuum Trucks:** EPA has been operating 10 SUPERVAC HEPA vacuum trucks to help the city cleanup the streets in the financial district, clean lobbies of federal buildings, and to assist where needed.
- **Drinking Water Sampling:** EPA and the city split samples taken from 13 routine drinking water sampling points in water mains in lower Manhattan. Most of the analysis is not yet completed on these samples, but there were no detectable levels of asbestos.
- **Hudson River Sampling:** EPA took a sample at the site of a storm drain near "ground zero" during a rain storm to determine the level of contaminants in water running off the site into the Hudson River. Results are expected this week.
- **TAGA Unit:** EPA is using its sophisticated mobile air monitoring unit to take samples of air and test for air toxics. None of the six samples taken indicated levels of concern.
- **Wastewater Treatment Plant:** EPA took several samples from the Newtown Creek Sewage Treatment Plant, which is the recipient of storm water from lower Manhattan. Results are expected later this week.
- * collecting, analyzing and distributing sampling data from all city, state and federal agencies
- * establishing cleaning stations for workers when they leave Ground Zero