October 31, 2001

Environmental Assessment Work Group (EAWG) for WTC - Roles and Accomplishments

The Environmental Assessment Work Group is lead by three chairpersons representing EPA-OERR, ATSDR, and OSHA. Although a larger number of agencies and offices (e.g., NYC DOH, NYC DEP, NY DEC, NIOSH, EPA-Region 2, EPA-OEI) actively participate in the weekly, twice/week calls and product development. The EAWG which was formed the weekend following September 11, provides direct assistance to New York City to supplement the critical day-to-day work conducted by Region 2, NYC, New York State, and OERR's Environmental Response Team (ERT). In order to understand NYC's needs and communicate with other players, EAWG members also participate in New York City's twice/week data analysis reporting calls (originally these were daily).

To date, the EAWG has accomplished the following:

Compiled Asbestos Action Levels for building reentry for the general public;

Coordinated with Region 8 on short term analytic and risk approaches for asbestos used for Libby and the WTC;

Worked with EPA's Office of Environmental Information (OEI) to establish a Multi-Agency database for daily sample analysis results. OEI also provides data entry and data management of this vast database (over 500,000 data points/parameters just for the asbestos data) ;

Provided asbestos air samples and TAGA organic analyses data in electronic format to the city and state while OEI developed the database;

Developed a residential sampling plan

Tracked down sampling equipment for residential sampling;

Assembled sampling teams;

Established a laboratory analysis contract for residential samples;

Coordinated with various local, state and federal agencies press offices to ensure frequent and continued communication;

Detailed ATSDR staff to NYC to meet ongoing health assessment needs;

Completed the transition of daily asbestos ambient laboratory analyses (e.g., up

to 120 air samples/day, 30 bulk samples per week) from OERR's ERT to OERR's Analytical Operations/Data Quality Center (AOC); and

Initiated a longer term "trends analysis" of all the analytical data in the Multi-Agency data base.

Longer term work for EAWG:

Complete residential sampling and analyses and associated recommendations/reports;

Ensure the Quality Assurance of all analytical data (e.g., conduct lab audits);

Oversee laboratory analyses for daily asbestos monitoring;

Expand transition of other daily analyses from ERT to AOC;

Finish data trends analysis;

Maintain data base; and

Complete longer term health assessment of asbestos exposure for residences and commercial buildings.