

DHSS Daily Follow-Up Review of Air Monitoring Data from the Bridgeton Landfill Area, May 31, 2013

The Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) has reviewed air quality screening data collected by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) at Bridgeton Landfill from the afternoon of May 30 to the afternoon of May 31, 2013. On April 23, DNR began routine, twice daily, surveillance of hydrogen sulfide, benzene, and odor levels around the entire periphery of the landfill. In addition, DNR has provided continuous monitoring of reduced sulfur compounds (reported as hydrogen sulfide), sulfur dioxide, carbon monoxide, and total volatile organic compounds (VOCs) at three fixed locations. On May 30, until mid-afternoon, monitors located east of the landfill were temporarily moved north of the landfill to be in a downwind location for sampling. At approximately 3:30 pm, those monitors were returned to their usual location east of the landfill. DHSS has reviewed both sets of data to identify potential public health concerns for short-term health effects. Generally, samples are collected near the property boundary and dispersion is expected to reduce exposure downwind of the sample locations.

Odors

Odors were reported by DNR as being mild today in several locations around the landfill. Winds were slow and shifting, although predominantly from the south.

- DNR detected low odors at locations north of the landfill using a Nasal Ranger olfactometer.
- DHSS continues to recommend that during periods of objectionable odor, sensitive individuals should stay indoors as much as possible, avoid outdoor exercise, and seek medical advice for any acute symptoms. Symptoms associated with exposure to strong odors include headache, nausea and fatigue. Symptoms generally associated with strong odors typically disappear once the odors dissipate.

Hydrogen Sulfide and Other Reduced Sulfur Compounds

Hydrogen sulfide concentrations were below levels of public health concern.

- The maximum concentration of hydrogen sulfide detected was 5.8 parts per billion (ppb). Hydrogen sulfide concentrations were detected by the Jerome meter, which is highly sensitive and specific to hydrogen sulfide.
- AreaRAE monitors briefly detected low concentrations of reduced sulfur compounds at the monitoring location east of the landfill. These compounds are not just hydrogen sulfide but primarily another reduced sulfur compound with lower toxicity. No reduced sulfur compounds were detected at the other monitoring locations.

Sulfur Dioxide

Average sulfur dioxide concentrations did not exceed levels of public health concern, except for a limited time period at two monitoring locations near the landfill.

- For approximately 2 ½ hours on May 30, the average sulfur dioxide concentration at the monitoring location east of the landfill was 0.02 parts per million (ppm), exceeding a health-based guideline for acute exposure.
- For approximately one half hour on May 30, the average sulfur dioxide concentration at the monitoring location north of the landfill was 0.02 parts per million (ppm), exceeding a health-based guideline for acute exposure.
- While exposure to these concentrations of sulfur dioxide may cause irritation and other short-term symptoms, considerable dispersion is expected to reduce potential exposure levels at nearby residential areas.

Benzene and Total VOCs

Benzene was not detected in ambient air at any of the surveillance locations around the landfill.

- Previous sampling has shown that, while several VOCs are present in the landfill source gas, benzene may be a primary VOC of public health concern.
- Total VOC concentrations were not at a level that indicates a need for compound-specific sampling.

Carbon Monoxide

Average carbon monoxide concentrations were well below levels of public health concern.

Radiation Rates

Gamma radiation rates continue to be at levels that are at or near natural background levels.

Gamma radiation levels are monitored continuously at three locations around the site using AreaRae instruments equipped with radiation detectors.