

DHSS Follow-Up Review of Air Monitoring Data from the Bridgeton Landfill Area, October 3 – October 7, 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 October 3 to the afternoon of October 7, 2013. On June 7, DHSS began issuing follow-up reviews of the daily air quality screening data on a twice-weekly basis.

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. 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

DNR reported light and moderate to strong odors during this time period at locations north, northeast, and east of the landfill.

- Winds were predominantly from the south, southwest, and west during this time period.
- DNR detected light to moderate odors north, northeast, and east of the landfill on October 3 and 4; light and moderate to strong odors north, northeast, and east of the landfill on October 5; and light and moderate to strong odors east of the landfill on October 6. Odors were monitored 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

Average hydrogen sulfide concentrations were well below levels of public health concern.

- The maximum concentration of hydrogen sulfide detected was 11.4 parts per billion (ppb) during routine monitoring. Hydrogen sulfide concentrations were detected by the Jerome meter, which is highly sensitive and specific to hydrogen sulfide.
- For one hour on October 3 at the monitoring location south of the landfill, average concentrations of reduced sulfur compounds exceeded a health-based guideline for acute exposure to hydrogen sulfide. However, these compounds detected by AreaRAE monitors are not just hydrogen sulfide but primarily another reduced sulfur compound with lower toxicity.

Sulfur Dioxide

Average sulfur dioxide concentrations were below levels of public health concern, except for several hours at one monitoring location.

- For one hour on October 3, one hour on October 5, seven hours on October 6, and seven hours on October 7 at the monitoring location west of the landfill, average sulfur dioxide concentrations exceeded a health-based guideline for acute exposure. While exposure to this concentration of sulfur dioxide may cause irritation or other short-term symptoms, considerable dispersion is expected to reduce potential exposure levels in nearby residential areas.

Benzene and Total VOCs

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

- 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. However, benzene was not detected during routine monitoring around the perimeter of the landfill.
- Average 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 were well below levels of public health concern.

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