

DHSS Follow-Up Review of Air Monitoring Data from the Bridgeton Landfill Area, August 22 – August 26, 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 August 22 to the afternoon of August 26, 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 odors during this time period at locations east, northeast, west, and southwest of the landfill.

- Winds were predominantly from the east, south, southeast, and southwest.
- During this time period, the DNR contractor detected moderate odors west and southwest of the landfill on August 23 and 24, and only low odors at other locations surrounding 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 well below levels of public health concern.

- The maximum concentration of hydrogen sulfide detected was 9.5 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 two hours on August 24 at the monitoring location west of the landfill, two hours on August 22, seven hours on August 23, and three hours on August 24 at the monitoring location east of the landfill, and one hour on August 24 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.

- Sulfur dioxide was briefly detected at the monitoring location west of the landfill. However, the average concentration of sulfur dioxide was less than 0.01 parts per million (ppm) and did not exceed health-based guidelines for acute exposure.

Benzene and Total VOCs

Benzene was not detected in ambient air except for a limited time period in low concentrations below levels of public health concern.

- Benzene was briefly detected at several surveillance locations surrounding the landfill on August 24. However, the maximum concentration of benzene detected was less than 0.009 ppm and did not exceed health-based guidelines for acute exposure.
- 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.
- 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.