



NEWS RELEASE

25 October 2010

Different types of monitoring tubes give similar results

Advice to residents of Hauxton remains unchanged following a comparison between two different types of monitoring tubes.

Two different types of monitoring tubes, used to check chemicals being released into the air, as land at the old Bayer site in Hauxton is cleaned-up, are recording similar results. This means advice from the Health Protection Agency (HPA) remains unchanged that clean-up work at the site does not pose an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment.

The land at the old Bayer site in Hauxton needs to be cleaned-up as the soil is contaminated with chemicals. The clean-up is being closely monitored by South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) and the Environment Agency, with advice from the HPA to make sure it is being done properly and that it does not pose an unacceptable risk to human health or the environment.

In response to concerns from local campaign group, Hauxair, that the type of sorbent (Tenax) in the monitoring tubes being used was not the most appropriate to detect the chemicals at the site, the second type of sorbent (Unicarb) they suggested was added to the monitoring programme.

Results for comparative 24-hour pumped sampling at Hauxton – of which 12 days worth of data between 1 September and 16 September was collected – has shown little difference between the two sampling types and therefore the two sorbents.

Compounds identified have been comparable and concentrations in the air recorded as being similar on the two sorbents.

The initial type of sorbent used called Tenax, in fact generally recorded concentrations higher than the type Hauxair suggested, Unicarb, for the most abundant volatile compounds detected.

The results shown by the Unicarb tubes do not alter the risk assessment made to date by the Health Protection Agency.

These initial results indicate that the original monitoring strategy of using just a Tenax sorbent is appropriate, and the addition of the Unicarb tubes has not altered the public health risk assessment.

Notes to editors:

Two methods of diffusion tube analysis have been used since the start of the works:

- Active sampling - air is actively pumped into a diffusion tube. This monitoring is carried out over a 24-hour period.
- Passive sampling - air passes diffusively into a diffusion tube. This monitoring is carried out over a 28-day period.

Between April and August one set of diffusion tubes was used containing a sorbent called Tenax, which has a wide performance scope and is ideal for identifying a wide range of VOCs.

During September, a duplicate set of diffusion tubes were placed around the site at the same locations as the Tenax tubes for both the 24-hour pumped sampling and the passive 28-day tubes.

The second set of tubes contain a different sorbent called Unicarb that targets and captures the ultra-volatile compounds for which HauxAir suggested Tenax may not be the most suitable material.

Monitoring with both sorbents will continue for at least another month to ensure that a robust dataset is obtained for the Hauxton site.

The results – 24-hour sampling

Results for comparative 24-hour pumped sampling at Hauxton – of which 12 days worth of data between 1 September and 16 September was collected – has shown little difference between the two sampling types and therefore the two sorbents.

Compounds identified have been comparable and concentrations in the air recorded as being similar on the two sorbents.

The Tenax diffusion tubes have generally recorded concentrations higher than the Unicarb tubes for the most abundant volatile compounds detected.

Results – the monthly sampling

In addition, the first set of monthly results for both types of sorbent have been analysed by the laboratory. As observed in the 24-hour pumped samples, the Unicarb and Tenax data is very similar.

Also observed with the 24-hour pumped data, the Tenax tubes have generally recorded higher concentrations than the Unicarb tubes for the most abundant compounds.

Media queries in the first instance should be directed to Emma Lowther at South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) on 01954 713289. SCDC are the first point of contact for any Bayer Site remediation works queries.