

NPL Site Narrative for Austin Avenue Radiation Site

AUSTIN AVENUE RADIATION SITE Delaware County, Pennsylvania

Conditions at Proposal (February 7, 1992): The Austin Avenue Radiation Site consists of 29 radioactively contaminated properties located in four boroughs and one township in Delaware County, Pennsylvania. The properties are: In Lansdowne Borough: the warehouse on South Union Avenue; 131, 133, and 136 Austin Avenue; 216 and 218 Wayne Avenue; 6, 10, and 16 Plumstead Avenue; 237 North Lansdowne Avenue; 11 Greenwood Avenue; and 126 Owen Avenue. In East Lansdowne Borough: 34 Lewis Avenue; 211 Penn Boulevard; 246 Melrose Avenue; 25, 137, and 151 Lexington Avenue; and 25 Beverly Avenue. In Upper Darby Township: 500 and 504 Harper Avenue; 346 Owen Avenue; 310 Shadeland Avenue; and 3723 Huey Avenue. In Aldan Borough: 64 South Clifton Avenue. In Darby Borough: 617, 619, 621, and 623 Pine Street.

The suspected source of the radioactive contamination is materials generated at the warehouse on South Union Avenue, where the defunct W.L. Cummings Radium Processing Co. operated a radium-refining process from 1915 to 1925. The properties are believed to have become contaminated when discarded radium tailings from the warehouse operations were used as construction materials at these locations.

Using CERCLA emergency funds, EPA temporarily relocated the residents from seven of the properties, conducted an initial assessment of over 100,000 properties using a radiation detection vehicle, visited 50 properties to conduct further monitoring, removed debris from the warehouse, and painted the warehouse interior to prevent potential transport of radioactive dust while the building is dismantled.

On September 6, 1991, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) of the U.S. Public Health Service issued an advisory warning that the gamma radiation levels in the duplex at 133 Austin Avenue represent a significant health threat and furthermore that this property and the abandoned warehouse pose a threat to the environment based on the radium, radon, and asbestos in the structures.

On January 10, 1992, ATSDR issued a follow-up health consultation memorandum that expanded the public health advisory to include seven newly discovered sites plus any future sites which EPA and ATSDR determine may present a significant threat to human health.

Under Section 300.425(c)(3) of the National Contingency Plan, the Federal regulation by which CERCLA is implemented, a site can be placed on the NPL if 1) ATSDR has issued a public health advisory recommending that people be removed from the site, 2) EPA determines that the site poses a significant threat to public health, and 3) EPA anticipates that it will be more cost effective to use its remedial authority (available only at NPL sites) than its emergency removal authority to respond to the site.

Status (October 1992): Using CERCLA emergency funds, EPA is excavating and removing contaminated soils to a regulated disposal facility. In addition, debris is being removed from the site.

EPA is proposing to expand the site to include additional contaminated areas.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.