

# COMMUNITY BULLETIN

## *THE LATEST IN OUR NEIGHBORHOOD*

### Information Regarding Dumping of Asbestos Containing Materials in the Town of Islip

**SUFFOLK COUNTY EXECUTIVE  
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#### **BULLETIN #1**

##### **SUMMARY**

Town of Islip residents may be concerned about what was in the waste materials allegedly illegally dumped at different locations in the community. This waste, which came from construction, renovation and demolition activities, was tested for the presence of asbestos. Asbestos can be a concern if it is "friable," which means the asbestos fibers are able to become a powdery form that people nearby could breathe into their lungs. Almost all of the asbestos-containing materials from these tests were not "friable," so the risk of exposure is low. Once all the tests are completed, work toward cleaning up the sites will begin. Additional bulletins will be added as new information becomes available.

The Suffolk County Department of Health Services (SCDHS) has prepared this Bulletin to provide health information regarding alleged illegal dumping in your communities, of construction and demolition material that contained asbestos. Construction and demolition materials are the waste materials from the construction, renovation, and demolition of structures such as buildings, roads, and bridges.

Currently there are three locations where asbestos has been confirmed: Roberto Clemente Park, located in Brentwood, a privately owned parcel located at the southeast corner of Route 111 and Sage Street in Central Islip and a Town of Islip park leased to the Police Athletic League (PAL) located on the southwest corner of Clayton Street and Lowell Ave in Central Islip. The Town of Islip has agreed to hire a consultant to conduct an assessment of the other Town park properties.

#### **Information about asbestos**

Asbestos containing materials are described as "friable" if the material, when dry, can be crumbled or reduced to a powder by hand pressure. Examples of asbestos containing materials that are considered friable include asbestos pipe insulation or spray-on fireproofing. Non-friable asbestos containing materials cannot be readily crumbled or reduced to a powder by hand pressure. Some examples of materials considered non-friable are asbestos floor tiles, roofing tiles and cement shingles. Friable



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asbestos containing materials can release asbestos fibers into the air with minor disturbance, and so pose a greater exposure risk than non-friable materials. Non-friable asbestos containing materials will not readily release asbestos fibers into the air if they are undisturbed, but they can release fibers if they are aggressively processed, for example, cut, ground or burned.

Sampling at the sites has been of pieces of surface debris or material taken from drilling down through the debris areas. Almost all the asbestos containing materials identified from these samples are types of materials, such as floor tiles, that do not readily release asbestos fibers when handled (so-called “non-friable” materials), which limits the chance of exposure and therefore, health risk.

The criminal and environmental investigations of these sites are ongoing. Additional contaminants, other than asbestos, have been identified and the results are being evaluated for environmental and public health impacts. The Suffolk County Department of Health Services is actively involved, along with state and local partners, in evaluating the environmental information from the sites, and will share it with the community as it becomes available. SCDHS will take appropriate action when indicated, such as we have done by requiring air monitoring and dust control.

**A brief summary of each location is provided below.**

#### **Roberto Clemente Park, Brentwood**

1. Construction debris which contains asbestos was used to fill in two soccer fields and a recharge basin (collects surface water run-off) in the park beginning approximately in June 2013. Only one of the many samples taken at Roberto Clemente Park contained friable asbestos. Other samples contained asbestos that was non-friable, that is the asbestos was in a form that does not readily release fibers when handled.
2. The Park was closed by the Town of Islip in early May, 2014 because of the presence of asbestos. The site is fenced, secured by a locked gate and is under surveillance. For more background information on this site, please refer to the Town of Islip website (<http://www.townofislip-ny.gov/>).
3. The time of potential exposure to those using the Park and surrounding area would have been from June 2013 to the time the Park was closed.
4. The risk of exposure would depend upon the amount of time someone spent at the park, the distance they were to the source of asbestos and the amount of asbestos in the soil or in the air.
5. Air testing that has recently been done around the perimeter of the park has not found asbestos in the air. Weekly testing of the air is ongoing. While this testing allows for monitoring of current conditions at the Park, it cannot be used to evaluate conditions in the past.
6. Soil tests performed at the site confirmed the presence of asbestos.
7. To prevent asbestos fibers from getting into the air where they can be inhaled, the contaminated areas in the Park are being watered as necessary to keep the soil moist and this process is being monitored daily by the SCDHS. This also will help to keep dust in general from getting into the air.

#### **Private Property located on southeast corner of Route 111 and Sage Street, Central Islip**

1. Testing at this site, performed on May of 2014, also confirmed the presence of asbestos. All of the asbestos found at this location was the non-friable form, which is the form that does not readily release fibers into the air when handled.
2. Access to the property is restricted by locked gates.



3. This site is also being watered by an irrigation system to prevent dust exposure and is monitored daily. Air monitoring will be done on a weekly basis starting the first week of June.

**Town of Islip park leased to the Police Athletic League (PAL), located on the southwest corner of Clayton Street and Lowell Ave in Central Islip**

1. Samples of debris material taken from this location in mid-May 2014 were tested and found to contain friable asbestos.
2. Asbestos was found in approximately a 10x10 foot area that is part of a larger debris pile that is approximately 100 feet long.
3. The approximately 10x10 foot debris pile has now been covered with a tarp.
4. Access to the property is restricted by a fence and locked gates.

**Health Issues**

It's not known if anyone has been exposed to asbestos at any of these sites. However, the chances of having some exposure would be highest the closer one is to the debris, such as workers unloading trucks or for residents living close to any of the sites. Further away from the debris, the chances of having any exposure would be less. Based on the information we have, if any exposures to asbestos from these sites have occurred, they are probably low. The exposure would certainly be much lower than work-related exposures that have led to serious disease. If you have questions about you or your family's health related to possible exposure at these sites, we encourage you to contact one of the resources on the attached information sheet.

**Remediation Process**

1. Once all test results are available and the sites are fully evaluated, a remediation (cleanup) plan will be developed.
2. All plans for cleanup will be reviewed and approved by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) which will also oversee the implementation of the cleanup.
3. A Community Air Monitoring Plan will be included in the remediation plan to ensure that during the cleanup, air quality in the community surrounding the sites is not affected.
4. Once the plan is approved, a licensed and certified contractor will clean up the site and conduct additional sampling as needed.
5. Appropriate monitoring will be conducted by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) and SCDHS.

**Additional Bulletins will be issued as new information becomes available.**





# Questions and answers about asbestos and dust in outdoor air

## What is asbestos?

Asbestos is the name given to a group of fibrous minerals that occur naturally in the environment. Asbestos fibers are strong, flexible, and heat resistant and have been used over the years for a wide range of building materials and manufactured goods, among them: roofing shingles, ceiling and floor tiles, paper products, and asbestos cement products, friction products (automobile clutch, brake, and transmission parts), heat-resistant fabrics, packaging, gaskets and coatings.

## How is someone exposed to asbestos?

We are all exposed to low levels of asbestos in the air we breathe, though levels are generally higher in cities and industrial areas. Higher levels of exposure occur most often when the asbestos-containing material is disturbed during demolition work, which releases fibers into the air. Undisturbed or buried asbestos-containing materials release very few fibers into the air. Asbestos containing materials are described as “friable” if the material, when dry, can be crumbled or reduced to a powder by hand pressure. Examples of asbestos containing materials that are considered friable include asbestos pipe insulation or spray-on fireproofing. Non-friable asbestos containing materials cannot be readily crumbled or reduced to a powder by hand pressure. Some examples of materials considered non-friable are asbestos floor tiles, roofing tiles and cement shingles. Friable asbestos containing materials can release asbestos fibers into the air with minor disturbance, and so pose a greater exposure risk than non-friable materials. Non-friable asbestos containing materials will not readily release asbestos fibers into the air if they are undisturbed, but they can release fibers if they are aggressively processed (for example, cut or ground) or burned.

## What are the health concerns of asbestos exposure?

It is known that long-term exposure to high levels of asbestos can be harmful to human health. When invisible asbestos fibers are disturbed, they can be inhaled and lodge in the lungs. Continued exposure increases the number of fibers that lodge in the lungs. Fibers embedded in lung tissue over many years may result in lung diseases such as asbestosis, lung cancer, or mesothelioma (a type of cancer). These diseases are a risk primarily for workers exposed to high levels of asbestos for years or decades. Asbestosis and mesothelioma are very rare in people who did not work in asbestos industries. The risk for developing asbestos related disease is also much greater among workers who smoke. There are no immediate symptoms from exposure to asbestos. Though no level of exposure to asbestos is completely safe, the risk of disease is directly related to how much you are exposed to, how often you are exposed and for how long your exposure lasts.

## Is dust a health concern?

Soil disturbance at construction or demolition sites can produce dust particles that are made up of different materials and vary in size. Small dust particles can become airborne and can be inhaled. Whether or not asbestos is present, breathing dust can cause short-term health effects such as eye, nose, throat and lung irritation, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and shortness of breath. Exposure to high levels of very small dust particles in air can also affect lung function and worsen medical conditions such as asthma and heart disease. Visible dust that settles on outdoor surfaces such as cars or porches is made



up of relatively large particles that when disturbed and inhaled do not reach the deepest parts of the lungs; however, breathing these particles can still be irritating to the sinuses and throat.

### **How can I reduce my exposure to dust in and around my home?**

Families can lower dust exposures by regularly cleaning the home of dust and tracked-in soil. To reduce dust exposure in homes, use damp cleaning methods. Mop floors often, and use damp cloths to clean tables, countertops and windowsills. To reduce the amount of soil that is tracked into the home, use a door mat or rug and remove your shoes when entering the home. Outdoors, damp-wipe dusty surfaces and hose down dusty shrubs and lawns to reduce the amount of surface dust that may be released into the air or enter the home on shoes.

### **Health care resources available:**

You may want to talk to your doctor or other health care provider. If you do not have a doctor, below is a list of Suffolk County Health Clinics, as well as occupational and environmental medicine centers.

#### **Suffolk County and Affiliated Health Centers:**

##### **Amityville - The Maxine S. Postal Tri-Community Health Center at Amityville**

1080 Sunrise Highway, Amityville, NY 11701  
Call (631) 439-1551 to make an appointment.

##### **Brentwood - The Suffolk County Brentwood Family Health Center**

1869 Brentwood Road, Brentwood, NY 11717  
Call (631) 439-1551 to make an appointment.

##### **Coram - The Elsie Owens Health Center at Coram**

82 Middle Country Road, Coram, NY 11727  
(631) 320-2220  
Operated by Hudson River HealthCare

##### **Greenlawn - The Dolan Family Health Center at Greenlawn**

284 Pulaski Road, Greenlawn, NY 11740  
(631) 425-5250/For an appointment call 425-5250  
Operated by Huntington Hospital

##### **Patchogue - The South Brookhaven Family Health Center at Patchogue**

365 East Main Street, Patchogue, NY 11772  
Call (631) 439-1551 to make an appointment.

##### **Riverhead - The Suffolk County Health Center at Riverhead**

County Center, 300 Center Drive, Riverhead, NY 11901  
Call (631) 439-1551 to make an appointment.

##### **Shirley - The Marilyn Shellabarger South Brookhaven Family Health Center East at Shirley**

550 Montauk Highway & Dorsett Place, Shirley, NY 11967  
Call (631) 439-1551 to make an appointment.

##### **Southampton - HRHCare Kraus Family Health Center of the Hamptons** (link: <http://www.hrhcare.org/medical-clinics/hrhcare-kraus-family-health-center-hamptons>)

330 Meeting House Lane, Southampton, NY 11968  
(631) 268-1008  
Operated by Hudson River HealthCare, Inc.

##### **Wyandanch - The Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Health Center at Wyandanch**

1556 Straight Path, Wyandanch, NY 11798  
Call (631) 439-1551 to make an appointment.



## **Occupational and Environmental Health Centers:**

### **Occupational and Environmental Medicine**

2035 Lakeville Road

3rd Floor

New Hyde Park, NY 11040

**Phone:** (516) 492-3297

**Fax:** (516) 492-3299

**E-mail:** [OEMLI@nshs.edu](mailto:OEMLI@nshs.edu)

### **Occupational and Environmental Medicine**

487 Lake Avenue

St. James, NY 11780

**Phone:** (631) 686-6390

**Fax:** (631) 584-8063

**E-mail:** [OEMLI@nshs.edu](mailto:OEMLI@nshs.edu)

### **Pediatric Environmental Specialty Unit at Mount Sinai**

Mount Sinai Hospital

New York City, NY

**Phone:** (866) 265-6201

### **For information requests regarding the Roberto Clemente Park:**

- For questions regarding the Roberto Clemente Park, please call the Town of Islip at 1-888-674-7501
- For questions regarding personal health resources, please contact Amy Juchatz of the Suffolk County Department of Health Services at 631-854-0088 (between the hours of 9 am and 5 pm)
- For general questions about asbestos, visit the New York State Department of Health web site <http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/asbestos/>; or call 518-402-7800
- For general questions about dust, visit the New York State Department of Health web site [http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/air/pmq\\_a.htm](http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/indoors/air/pmq_a.htm) or call 518-402-7820 or 800-458-1158
- For general questions regarding air quality, contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation web site [http://www.dec.ny.gov/cfm/xtapps/aqi/aqi\\_forecast.cfm](http://www.dec.ny.gov/cfm/xtapps/aqi/aqi_forecast.cfm) and/or phone 1-800-535-1345
- For questions about water quality, contact the Suffolk County Department of Health Services, Office of Water Resources at 631-852-5810

