JESC hazardous materials report factsheet

On 27 February 2024, the Justice and Community Safety Directorate (JACS) was advised of some hazardous materials in a worksite being managed by building contractors in the Gungahlin Joint Emergency Services Centre (JESC).

A detailed investigation into the source of these hazardous materials has taken place with results and next steps outlined below.

Which hazardous materials were investigated?

The investigation examined the lead-containing dust on the top of the ceiling tiles in the roof cavity in one section of the building.

It assessed the carbon elements (DPM) – also called diesel particulates - found on surfaces in the engine bay store area of the building.

This has all been included in the investigation report which is available on our website.

Who wrote the report?

This report has been prepared by Property Risk Australia (ACT) Pty Ltd (PRA) on behalf of Complete Constructions (Aust) Pty Ltd.

An independent quality assurance review of the investigation report was also done by Robson Environmental we could be certain we are providing a safe work environment.

How was the investigation done?

PRA performed a documentation review, onsite survey, and sampling (air monitoring and surface samples), analysis of sample results and the preparation of an investigation report and register.

What were the results from the lead dust investigation?

As a result of this thorough investigation, we are confident that none of our staff have been exposed to lead.

Lead dust was only identified in the ceiling space.

No lead dust was found in the areas where staff work.

There was no clear source of the lead dust contamination within the JESC building.

The investigation confirmed that the source of contamination was potentially external to the building.

What is being done?

WorkSafe ACT have approved us removing the lead dust from ceilings currently being refurbished.

We only need to take further action on the remaining ceiling space if we need to do renovations or destructive work in the future.

Last updated: 27 March 2024

What were the results from the diesel particulates investigation?

The testing found there was no presence of elemental carbon found on any of the surfaces sampled suggesting there was no presence of DPM on the surfaces tested.

Based on these test results, no further action is required regarding the diesel particulates.

It is most likely that the presence of the particulates has come from carbon burning from the diesel used in our emergency services vehicles, it creates small amounts of diesel particulates.

Does this mean our cleaning systems work well?

This investigation gave us complete assurance that our systems are working well.

We know that our exhaust fans and vehicles are in good condition, and our regular industrial cleaning is effective.

Is anything else being done?

We are doing a full industrial clean of the whole building to ensure that all potential contaminants, including dust lead and diesel contaminants are removed.

Whilst this was not a recommendation of the report, nor required by Worksafe ACT, we know our staff and volunteers have been concerned and we want to reassure them that we are providing a safe work environment.

How long will the lead dust removal and cleaning take?

Nobody is allowed onsite during the remediation scheduled to take several days.

We will be able to inspect the building at the end of the next week to discuss further options and re-occupancy.

When will the building open for staff and volunteers?

Staff will not return to the JESC building until we have fully assessed the situation and can ensure that it is safe to do so.

If the levels are safe, why did staff and volunteers move out?

We could not identify the source of the hazardous materials and we were not going to put staff, volunteers, or visitors at risk.

We are confident that we reacted quickly to community and staff needs, and we are encouraged that our regular environmental measures were tested and found to be effective.

I have an existing health issue; do I need to get tested?

This investigation shows that staff and volunteers were not exposed to lead dust or diesel particulates.

Where can I get more information?

You can view the report and independent review on the JACS website:

- Investigation & Risk Assessment Report

ACT Health and Safe Work Australia have some excellent resources available.

- Lead exposure and your health
- Diesel particulates factsheet