

INFORMATION SHEET #8 MIT W85 – WESTGATE JULY 2, 2008

This information sheet provides an update on the polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) abatement activities at the Westgate housing complex. As previously announced, PCBs have been detected in exterior building materials (i.e., caulking and adjacent concrete/brick) and some soil samples near the Westgate Complex. While an evaluation performed by MIT showed that leaving these materials in place without disturbing them does not present an imminent health risk, the PCBs could be transported to other locations or media (e.g., groundwater or surface water). In addition, some of the PCB levels measured are above US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) environmental thresholds for abatement/remediation. MIT is arranging to contain or remove these materials to achieve the EPA's stringent high occupancy or residential cleanup levels.

As you recall a full-scale pilot test of EPA-approved PCB remediation activities was done in late Fall of 2007. During the last project status update meeting on May 15, 2008, we've described and discussed the lessons learned from the pilot test and proposed revised work activities. Currently planned activities such as working with hand tools only, no brick removal, specific building sequencing, etc. incorporate the suggestions/discussions during that meeting.

EPA has approved the revised work activities and the project is scheduled to start during the week of July 7st. As discussed in the May 15, 2008 meeting, work activities will only be conducted on one side of the buildings at a time, commencing on the street sides of Buildings HJK and FG. Our initial schedule of activities is as follows (NOTE: schedule updates will be provided routinely throughout the course of the project):

- Street Side of Buildings HJK and FG – July 7th - August 15th
- Street Side of Buildings ABC and DE – July 14th – August 29th
- Courtyard Side of Buildings HJK and FG – August 18th – September 26th
- Courtyard Side of Buildings ABC and DE – September 2nd – October 3rd
- Soil Removal and Site Restoration in all Areas – October 6th – November 18th

As described in the May 15th meeting and as presented on the proposed Work Sequence (available on the Westgate web page), the “work activities” are represented by several different tasks. The dates presented above, encompass the estimated time for all tasks to be completed on the respective sides of the building. For example, the physical removal of the caulking is planned to take only 2 weeks for each side of the building with the remainder of the time for the encapsulant application, washing of the balconies, inspections, and verifications of the work. The schedule is also dependent on the verification results and laboratory analyses to demonstrate that the cleanup levels have been achieved.

In summary, the revised remediation approach to be conducted includes an expanded containment approach (covering in place) and less removal, thereby minimizing the level of disruption. The materials we are planning to use are epoxy encapsulant (Sikaguard 62), replacement caulking (Sikaflex 2C), and the decontamination fluid (Capsur) and the Material Safety Data Sheets are available on the Westgate website.

The MIT EHS Office, Housing Office, and the environmental medicine specialist at the Medical Department are available to answer questions. We have also hired a “Project Oversight Manager”, Richard Gang, rgang@mit.edu, who will be on-site during the duration of the project and able to answer any and all project related questions. We are planning on having a meeting the week of July 7th to share and discuss schedules, work progress and to introduce Richard.

We will continue to communicate information as activities progress. Please direct any questions that you may have to Dennis Collins, Director of Housing [\[colins@mit.edu\]](mailto:colins@mit.edu).

Additional information regarding PCBs is available on the web at:

<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts17.pdf>.