



Colorado Department  
of Public Health  
and Environment

# FACT SHEET

## *Lowry Asbestos Update*

*July 2003*

### **BACKGROUND**

In April 2003, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (the Department) issued two compliance advisories to the Lowry Redevelopment Authority (LRA), the U.S. Air Force (Air Force) and the northwest neighborhood homebuilders. The advisories stopped all excavation activities in the northwest neighborhood and set forth a schedule for the homebuilders and Air Force to investigate the asbestos contamination, control dust emissions and develop any necessary clean-up plans. The northwest neighborhood is defined as those areas west of Uinta Way, north of 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue, east of Quebec and south of 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Since the advisories were issued, the Department has been working with the LRA, the Air Force, the City of Denver, and the neighborhood homebuilders to investigate the extent of the asbestos contamination. Technical advice was also provided by the Denver Office of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. In accordance with Department requirements, and following public input, the Department will direct the recipients of the compliance advisories to implement a final response plan.

### **INITIAL SAMPLING RESULTS**

The northwest neighborhood sampling plans address indoor air and dust, visual inspections for the presence of asbestos-containing debris and surface and subsurface soil sampling. The first phase of sampling included homes where landscaping has not been completed. Since sampling began in May, local laboratories have analyzed more than 7,000 samples from those lots. The Department, the homebuilders, LRA and the Air Force have recently finalized sampling plans for lots that have landscaping, and for lots where grading and excavation has not been initiated or completed. Sampling in these areas has recently begun.

#### **Indoor Sampling of Air and Dust**

Indoor sampling has been performed in 83 homes, and current data shows that there is no evidence of indoor asbestos contamination in these homes. This is good news because it indicates that little, if any, asbestos has been carried indoors where it might cause exposures to residents.

#### **Surface and Subsurface Soil Sampling**

Approximately 80 surface and subsurface soil samples have been collected from each lot. The lots were divided into sampling grids of approximately 200 square feet in size. Asbestos-containing debris has been found both on the surface and in the subsurface soil in the northwest neighborhood. **Surface soil samples** have been taken on 101 lots. Initial results indicate that roughly one-third show detections of asbestos on at least some portion of the lot. **Subsurface soil samples** have been taken from 91 lots. Initial results indicate that approximately two-thirds show detections of asbestos on some portion of the lot.

To date, more than 90 percent of soil samples taken show no detection of asbestos. Approximately 70 lots show, the presence of a detectable level of asbestos in either surface or subsurface soils, ranging from an isolated detection to numerous grids containing asbestos fibers.

The Air Force has completed surface soil sampling and indoor sampling for Buildings 670 and 667, but has not yet begun subsurface sampling.

### **PROPOSED FINAL RESPONSE PLAN**

The Department has developed a proposed clean-up plan that is protective of human health and the environment. The clean-up plan is designed to eliminate public exposure to asbestos by careful, controlled removal of contaminated soils and replacing them with clean fill. In grids within lots where asbestos has been detected on the surface, 12 inches of soil will be removed, and replaced with clean fill.\*

Grids where asbestos has been detected in the subsurface will have 18 inches of soil removed and replaced with clean fill. In the event that visible asbestos is identified below 18 inches, an additional 6 inches will be removed.

Once the plan is finalized the homebuilders, LRA and Air the Force will have 14 days to begin implementation.

The Proposed Response Plan is available at the Department's web site ([www.cdphe.state.co.us/lowry/index.html](http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/lowry/index.html)) or the Lowry Links web site ([www.lowrylink.com](http://www.lowrylink.com)).

### Proposed Response Plan

**Surface Detection: 12 inches of soil removal\***  
**Replace with clean fill**

**Subsurface Detection: 18 to 24 inches of soil removal**  
**Replace with clean fill**

\* *Twelve inches will be removed unless sample data demonstrate that asbestos contamination is limited to six inches in a grid. In this instance only 6 inches will be removed.*

### **PRECAUTIONS DURING CLEAN UP**

During clean-up activities the homebuilders, LRA and the Air Force must adhere to strict asbestos control rules that will minimize asbestos emissions. For health and safety reasons, residents are advised to keep children and pets out of the immediate work area when clean-up activities are being performed, and to close windows. If you notice activities that are creating dust, please notify the Department's Air Pollution Control Division at (303) 692-3100.

### **NO FURTHER ACTION DETERMINATIONS**

The Department has already begun, and will continue to issue "No Further Action" (NFA) letters to properties that have no detections of asbestos. NFA letters will also be issued for lots where asbestos has been detected and clean up has been completed. NFA letters will state that the homebuilders, LRA and Air Force have complied with the Department's advisories and that the lot is suitable for residential use and does not pose an unacceptable risk to human health.

### **LANDSCAPING STATUS**

Builders and homeowners have been asked to refrain from installing landscaping until sampling and any necessary clean up has been completed. The Department has agreed to a process to allow homebuilders or homeowners of a particular lot to install landscaping in front or back yards once soils have been completely sampled and found not to contain asbestos. While we acknowledge that clean-up activities may further inconvenience residents, please understand that the Department is working along with the homebuilders, LRA and the Air Force to resolve this issue as quickly as possible.

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

The Department has received hundreds of calls, e-mails and letters concerning the asbestos investigation. Department staff members value and consider all comments and encourage residents with comments or questions to call the numbers below. In addition, the Lowry Restoration Advisory Board (RAB), a community-based group that addresses environmental remediation issues at Lowry, receives monthly asbestos updates. The RAB meets every third Wednesday at 6:30 PM at the LRA offices on Lowry. The RAB is made up of residents, interested citizens, and representatives from governmental and non-governmental groups. RAB meetings are always open to the public. Similarly, the Lowry Community Advisory Committee, which address redevelopment issues at Lowry, also receives a monthly asbestos update and their meetings are the second Tuesday of the month at the LRA. Meeting agendas for both committees are posted on [www.lowrylink.com](http://www.lowrylink.com).

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