

Environmental Issues in Construction

Fiscal Year 2016



The SCA requires the highest environmental standards

The New York City School Construction Authority (SCA) addresses health and safety questions that arise during school construction. The information within describes the protocols utilized by the SCA to meet city, state and federal environmental safety regulations and exceed them in protecting the school environment during construction.

SCA's Asbestos Abatement during School Construction

Prior to construction, the SCA's environmental consultants review all available data documenting any asbestos-containing materials (ACM) contained in the school. After the data review, a field survey is conducted at the school including collection and analysis of samples. The SCA's environmental consultants then prepare detailed specifications for the abatement.

- ▶ Asbestos abatement is never done when a school is occupied.
- ▶ An independent environmental consultant and SCA's Industrial Hygienists monitor the abatement activities.
- ▶ Abatement is performed under Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regulations, permits, and oversight.
- ▶ Air monitoring and visual inspections are both conducted after the asbestos abatement is completed.
- ▶ When abatement is completed, the SCA's environmental consultant conducts an additional inspection of the work area.
- ▶ After analysis of post-abatement air monitoring samples indicate final air clearance has been achieved, a re-occupancy letter is issued by the SCA's environmental consultant to the school.



SCA's Lead-Based Paint Policy during Construction

It is SCA's policy to assume all interior painted surfaces are coated with lead-based paint. All work that disturbs painted surfaces must comply with USEPA and OSHA lead-based paint requirements.

- ▶ Dust control precautions are used to prevent possible spread of dust and reduce worker exposure during construction.
- ▶ SCA standard construction specifications require the installation of dust barriers prior to the start of construction activities, daily cleanup, including wet mopping, wet wiping and HEPA vacuuming.
- ▶ SCA environmental consultants utilizing EPA and DEP certified personnel perform wipe sampling at the end of construction.
- ▶ A re-occupancy letter is issued by SCA's environmental consultant to the school indicating that wipe sampling has been achieved.

Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

The SCA is spearheading the most aggressive school PCB ballasts remediation program in the nation. Fluorescent lights with PCB ballasts are being replaced with energy efficient fluorescent lights.



PCBs were added to caulk and elastic sealant materials, particularly from 1950-1977. When caulk with PCBs is disturbed, it may produce dust that contains PCBs. The SCA has developed and implemented stringent dust control practices to minimize the potential exposure to PCB-containing dust during construction.

- ▶ All caulking is tested for PCBs if it will be disturbed during construction.
- ▶ SCA employs the same dust control measures for PCBs as is used for lead dust control. The protocols require rigorous dust control measures during the work, followed by cleaning and inspection at the conclusion of every work shift.
- ▶ After completion of renovation or demolition that involves the disturbance of exterior PCB caulking material, soil adjacent to the school building is sampled, by a qualified environmental professional to test for the presence of PCBs and remediated if required.

For more information on our PCB Program, for caulk and light ballast replacement please visit:

nycsca.org/Community/Programs/EPA-NYC-PCB/Pages/default.aspx

Mold Remediation in Schools during Construction

Mold is a form of fungi and is present almost everywhere in indoor and outdoor environments. Indoors, mold growth is encouraged by warm and humid conditions. Mold needs moisture to grow and becomes a problem only where there is water damage, high humidity, or dampness.



- ▶ The SCA's environmental consultants assess potential mold growth, water damage, or musty odors in the school. Equipment is employed to view spaces in ductwork or behind walls, as well as to measure moisture in building materials that may encourage mold growth.
- ▶ These consultants conduct a comprehensive field survey of the suspected area and provide a detailed inventory of all effected material.
- ▶ Remedial measures are recommended as needed. These recommendations typically include; thorough cleanup, drying, and/or removal of water damaged material. In all instances, any source of water must be fully investigated and remediated.
- ▶ Upon satisfactory completion of the work and final inspection, SCA's Industrial Hygienist issues written notification to school administration that the space is suitable for re-occupancy.

If you have any questions about environmental issues during construction, please email ercmailbox@nycsca.org



NYC SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION AUTHORITY
30-30 THOMAS AVENUE
LONG ISLAND CITY, NY 11101
718-472-8000
ercmailbox@nycsca.org