

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Illinois Department of Transportation
Village of Algonquin

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 23, 2009

Algonquin, IL

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA), Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT), and Village of Algonquin are working collaboratively to address concerns about possible volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in the ground in a specific area in downtown Algonquin.

As part of the process of acquiring property in preparation for the Western Bypass, a road construction project planned to alleviate traffic congestion at the intersection of Routes 31 and 62 in Algonquin, IDOT conducted tests of soil and groundwater. Initial soil and groundwater tests revealed the presence of higher than normal levels of certain types of VOCs in a few test locations. IDOT reported their findings to the IEPA, and the IEPA is conducting further investigation. The area under investigation is located generally east of the Toastmaster property at 401 Washington Street, bordered approximately by the Prairie Trail bike path to the west and south, Towne Park to the north, and Route 31 to the east. Initial research indicates that the source of the VOCs may be the Toastmaster property, an old industrial site that is currently abandoned. Throughout its history, the factory on this site produced items such as irons, shell casings during wartime, and appliances. Cleanup of the Toastmaster property is slated to take place by IDOT as part of the Western Bypass project once they have acquired the source property.

The IEPA will be communicating directly with those property owners possibly impacted by potentially higher than normal levels of VOC in the groundwater. Right now, the investigation is preliminary. Based on the data available at this time, no health risk has been identified. Additional sampling is being planned. The IEPA, in conjunction with the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH), is taking all necessary precautions, and the Village of Algonquin and IDOT are assisting them in their efforts. At this time, the IEPA knows of no private wells in the affected area. The Village's water system is not impacted by the presence of VOCs in the groundwater in this area.

Certain levels of VOCs are commonly found in homes due to various sources, such as building materials (carpeting, paint), home and personal care products (air fresheners, cleaning products), behaviors (cooking, drycleaning, smoking). The health effects from exposures to

VOCs vary based on the individual exposed, the specific chemicals involved and the level of those chemicals.

In the next few weeks, the IEPA and IDPH will be meeting with homeowners and business owners in the downtown area to discuss further testing to evaluate levels of risk, if any, and to discuss possible remedies.

Further information will be provided as it becomes available.

Residents seeking more information on this matter should contact Tammy Mitchell at the Illinois EPA at (217) 524-2292.