



Portsmouth Naval Shipyard Installation Restoration Program RAB Update: November 14, 2002

Portsmouth Naval Shipyard's Installation Restoration Advisory Board (RAB) met on Thursday, November 14, 2002 at the Best Western in Portsmouth, NH. The agenda consisted of one item:

- A presentation on the draft final Site 30 Engineering Evaluation/Cost Analysis (EE/CA) report.

Site 30 investigations show pit fill material and water and crystalline growth apparently associated with the pit represent potential risks.

Building 184 was constructed in 1943 as a galvanizing plant. A pit was constructed inside the building to hold the chemical tanks that were used as part of the industrial cleaning operations in the galvanizing plant. The pit was constructed of concrete with acid-proof brick lining and acid-proof cement grouting. The pit was previously covered, and then reopened as needed for use in industrial cleaning. The pit was closed for the last time in the 1960s. At that time the pit was filled in and covered over with a concrete floor, and since then the building has been used as a welding school. At various times since the pit was filled, a crystalline substance has been noted to form on the inside wall of the building near the former pit. The crystalline growth was found to be acidic (based on a low pH).

Investigation at the site indicated that there is a potential risk to people working in the building who could come in direct contact (skin contact) with the acidic crystals. The investigation showed that the fill material (including water) in the pit is the likely source of the crystalline growth. In addition, there is a concern that if there would be a release from the pit, the high metals concentrations in the pit water could potentially adversely impact groundwater under the site. The water in the pit does not currently appear to be connected to the groundwater under the site (as indicated by a comparison of water levels in the pit and outside the building); and data for groundwater outside the building does not suggest an impact; therefore, this is only a potential future concern. The source of the water in the pit is not clear; however, it may be rainfall/surface water runoff that is seeping into the building and then into the pit. The water in the pit may then soak up to the surface of the building floor, evaporate, and form crystals. The Navy determined that rather than investigate the site further to extensively characterize the contents of the pit, and to find the source of the water; it would be a more pro-active approach to remove the source material (i.e., the pit fill material). Therefore, the Navy is recommending a non-time critical removal action for the former acid pit be conducted to mitigate potential risks from waste materials. A removal action is any measure used to mitigate potential or actual risks through treatment, containment, and/or physical removal of the contaminated material from the site.

The Navy recommends excavation, off-site disposal, and site restoration to mitigate potential risks from waste materials in a covered pit within Building 184.

The EE/CA provides the identification of possible removal action alternatives, the evaluation of possible alternatives, and the Navy's recommended alternative. The Navy evaluated three alternatives including no action (required as part of all EE/CA evaluations); in-place treatment of pit fill and water; and removal and off-site disposal of pit fill and water. The evaluation considered which alternative would best reduce the potential for crystal growth that could be a concern for workers in the building (because it is acidic) and reduce the future potential for metals in the pit water to be released from the pit and to contaminate the groundwater under the site. The evaluation also considered the ability to implement each alternative and the estimated costs associated with each alternative. Based on this evaluation, the Navy determined that excavation and off-site disposal, followed by site restoration would be better than in-place treatment. The Navy therefore is recommending that the alternative that includes excavation, off-site disposal and site restoration be selected as the removal action for Site 30.

Once the Site 30 EE/CA is finalized (expected at the end of December 2002), the Navy will hold a 30-day public comment period on the Navy's recommendation. The start of the comment period and the availability of the final Site 30 EE/CA for public review will be announced in the local paper. Following the public comment period, the Navy will document the final selection of the alternative.

Next Meeting
 Announced

The next regular meeting of the RAB will be held on:

Thursday, January 30, 2003, beginning at 7:00 P.M.

Best Western Wynwood Suites, Portsmouth Traffic Circle, Portsmouth, NH

The agenda will include a presentation of the draft Demonstration Plan, Quality Assurance Project Plan and Health and Safety Plan for DRMO. As usual, interested members of the public are welcome.

Questions?

If you would like more information on this or others matters relating to the Installation Restoration Program at Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, please contact:

To be added to the mailing list please contact the Shipyard Public Affairs Office at the address or telephone number listed.

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