
EPA Work Continues Near Southeast Chicago Facility

S.H. Bell Company

Chicago, Illinois

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For more information

For questions, comments or more information, please contact:

Air Monitoring

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Soil Sampling Access Agreements

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For more information (including air monitoring data):

<https://www.epa.gov/il/sh-bell-chicago-facility>

Medical information

For medical information on environmental conditions contact:

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Air Monitoring

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began investigating fugitive dust and manganese issues at S.H. Bell's Chicago facility in April 2014. Due to U.S. EPA's efforts, S.H. Bell has installed new air pollution control equipment, implemented an enhanced fugitive dust plan, and installed air quality monitors to measure PM10 (particulate matter, also known as soot) and manganese at the facility. U.S. EPA has also requested the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry evaluate the impact of the facility on the community based on the data collected by the air quality monitors. Once finalized, this report will be made public.

On Aug. 7, 2017, U.S. EPA issued a Notice of Violation under the Clean Air Act to S.H. Bell.¹ The Agency determined manganese emissions exceeded the health-based screening level at the company's storage and transfer facility at 10218 S. Ave. O. Air monitoring data from March 1 through June 30, 2017, showed an average concentration of 0.32 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) of manganese. The minimal risk level for chronic inhalation exposure to manganese is 0.3 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$. Since August 2017, there has been a decrease in manganese emissions around the facility to far below the minimal risk level.

U.S. EPA staff continues to inspect S.H. Bell's Chicago facility to confirm the company is complying with federal and state regulations. S.H. Bell is subject to other ongoing obligations set forth in the Dec. 5, 2016, legal document called the "Stipulated Settlement and Final Consent Order." The Order included operation and maintenance of the air monitors.

Soil Sampling

U.S. EPA will assess manganese levels in soil near the S.H. Bell facility to determine if a cleanup is needed to protect public health. The city of Chicago requested U.S. EPA assist with a soil assessment in April 2018. U.S. EPA will perform targeted sampling of residential yards near the facility in the area between the Calumet River to the West, South Ewing Avenue to the East, 100th Street to the North and 104th Street to the South. U.S. EPA is requesting access agreements with residents to sample their yards. U.S. EPA will work with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to evaluate the soil sampling data and decide if a cleanup is needed.

Manganese is a naturally occurring element found in many soils, rocks and foods, and is used in the production of steel and other industrial processes. Manganese can be toxic when inhaled by humans at elevated exposure levels, leading to neurological and neuropsychological damage.

¹ The Aug. 7, 2017, U.S. EPA Notice of Violation was issued under Section 113(a)(1) of the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(a)(1). U.S. EPA found that S.H. Bell Co. was violating the Illinois State Implementation Plan at its Chicago facility.