

MEDIA RELEASE SA HEALTH

Tuesday January 20th, 2009

Clovelly Park ground contamination update

SA Health and the Environment Protection Authority are to test a small number of Clovelly Park homes as part of on-going investigations into soil and ground water contamination in the area.

The residents of 30 homes and a block of units have been asked to volunteer to test for signs of industrial chemical gases.

In November 2008, SA Health and the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) cautioned residents in part of Clovelly Park not to use bore water for human consumption after traces of the chemicals trichloroethene (TCE) and vinyl chloride were found in the groundwater.

SA Health and the EPA now want to test the soil and air inside a small number of homes for these industrial chemicals and other common solvents after small traces were picked up in soil in an industrial area near houses.

To help determine if this soil contamination is affecting nearby homes, the residents of 30 houses and a block of flats are being asked to volunteer to allow air testing inside their homes.

SA Health's Director of Public Health, Dr Kevin Buckett said: "These substances are already found in very small amounts in the environment, especially in our cities, due to their use in paints, paint strippers, glues, solvents, dry cleaning and even from cigarette smoke.

"The testing done so far suggests the levels are not high enough to make people sick, but we want to test this group of homes to make sure."

TCE is an industrial chemical used widely as a metal cleaner and degreaser. In the past, TCE was used in many other applications including dry-cleaning, extracting caffeine from coffee beans in the production of decaffeinated coffee and as an anaesthetic gas in hospitals. Vinyl chloride is a chemicals used in the manufacture of PVC plastics.

"These chemicals are commonly used in manufacturing and we know from past occupational exposure that they can be toxic to people," Dr Buckett said.

"However, people are only at risk if they are exposed to high concentrations of TCE or vinyl chloride over a long period of time."

For more information

Call the SA Health Media Line
Telephone: 08 8226 6488



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Testing will take place between January and the start of February.

Meanwhile, the EPA continues its investigations into the source of the ground contamination of the Clovelly Park area.

Residents who would like more information can contact SA Health on 8226 7100.

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