



FORMER NAVAL STATION TREASURE ISLAND INTERIOR SURVEYS WITHIN SITE 12

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Health and Safety Questions (General)

1. Am I at risk from radiation exposure?
 - a. Everyone is exposed to radiation naturally on a daily basis regardless of location or lifestyle. The radiation exposures that the Navy is investigating are less than or comparable to the amount of radiation received by the average person on an average day. However, the Navy will identify and remove any non-naturally occurring radiated materials to reduce additional exposure.
2. Are you going to test residents for exposure to radiation?
 - a. No, the type of radiation to which residents may have been exposed would not be present in the body and would not cause any detectable symptoms or effects.
3. Will residents on the island be provided with devices for testing their homes for radiation exposure?
 - a. No, the Navy will perform surveys using specialized equipment with oversight by the California Department of Public Health. The specialized equipment to detect the low levels of radiation in the housing units is not readily available to the public. Additionally, training is necessary for proper operation of the equipment. Survey findings will be provided to Treasure Island residents.
4. Are radiation surveys being done now to protect my own health and that of my family?
 - a. The Navy is conducting surveys to assess whether there are potential radiation exposures to you and your family above what you would normally experience in everyday living. In the event the surveys reveal unsafe levels of radiation you will be relocated from home.
5. If everything is safe, why are you conducting interior radiological surveys now?
 - a. The Navy is conducting the surveys now out of abundance of caution and to address residents' concerns. During a comprehensive survey of all open land within the leased housing area, some radioactive material (objects and soil) was identified. Although the material did not pose a radiological hazard to public health it was removed. Most recently the Navy identified elevated radiation readings in two historically unoccupied units since operational closure from sources beneath the foundations of those housing units. This was the first radiological data collected within housing units which indicated that there may be some potential for exposure to residents. Therefore, the Navy will conduct surveys inside all the leasable housing units to evaluate your safety. Additionally, residents have requested that the Navy conduct these surveys.
6. Did the Boys & Girls Club move off the Island because of health concerns?
 - a. The decision to move off island was an independent action taken by the Boys & Girls Club. The California Department of Public Health completed radiological surveys in and around the Boys & Girls Club in August 2012 and issued a conclusion that, "no elevated readings were observed in or around the facilities".

General Radiation/Radiological Questions

7. What do you mean that there is radiation in everyday living?
 - a. Humans are exposed to radiation every day from natural sources (such as the sun, some foods, soils/rocks and some natural materials used in construction). There are also routine exposures from medical examinations (such as dental x-rays).
8. How do the radiation levels on the island compare to everyday radiation exposure?

- a. Some examples of everyday radiation exposure are watching television (1 mrem per year), flying in an airplane (1 mrem for every 2 hours in the air), getting a dental x-ray (1 mrem per bitewing X-ray), exposure to the sun at sea level (24 mrem per year) or smoking 1.5 packs of cigarettes per day for a year (1,300 mrem per year). The amount of exposure from non-natural radiation sources that may be found on the island is anticipated to be less than the amount of radiation you receive in everyday living.
9. What is the unit “mrem” that is used when talking about radiation exposure?
 - a. Rem is the dosage for the biological effects of ionizing radiation for humans. It is a measure of the probability of effect radiation has on people. A millirem (mrem) is 1/1,000th of a rem: 1,000 mrem equals 1 rem. These units are often used in reference to time, such as mrem per hour. The sensitive equipment being used for the surveys on the island are actually measuring microrem per hour. A microrem is 1/1000 of a millirem, a very small number with regard to radiation exposures.
 10. Who sets radiation protection standards?
 - a. Radiation protection standards are established by many federal and state agencies (e.g. Nuclear Regulatory Commission, Environmental Protection Agency, and the California Department of Public Health). The Navy works with all of these agencies and more to ensure compliance with all radiation protection requirements.
 11. Who is in charge of the surveys?
 - a. The Navy is responsible for conducting the surveys; however, all work is being overseen and coordinated with the California Department of Public Health and is further reviewed by the City and County of San Francisco.
 12. Who is doing the surveys?
 - a. Trained personnel, licensed by the California Department of Public Health and under contract by the Navy, will perform the surveys using specialized equipment.

Cleanup/Investigation/Data Questions

13. Did the Navy dump radiological waste in the housing area?
 - a. Radioactive materials were disposed in the Solid Waste Disposal Areas (SWDAs) along the northwestern shoreline before the housing area was developed. The rules and regulations governing waste disposal at that time were significantly less stringent than today. Management and disposal of radium was not regulated prior to the construction of the housing. Based on further evidence, the Navy now believes that during the development of the housing area, the area was graded and small amounts of radioactive material from the SWDAs was transported to other areas within the housing area.
14. What kinds of objects did the Navy find in the soil in the housing area?
 - a. Most of the objects recovered are old rusted dials and gauges that were painted with glow in the dark paint containing radium-226. Additional objects, referred to as “foils” are small 6- and 8-sided disk sources. The Navy has not previously found these types of sources at any of our other Navy installations. While our research is ongoing, the origin of these sources has not yet been identified.
15. What does it mean when a site is labeled “radiologically impacted”?
 - a. A radiologically impacted site is one that, based on historical information, has, or at one time had, the potential for radioactive contamination in excess of natural background levels. In most instances, designation as radiologically impacted does not mean that radioactive contamination is present; it only means that the possibility for radiological contamination exists and must be investigated. A non-impacted site is one where there is no reasonable potential for residual radioactive contamination based on historical documentation and/or the results of previous radiological surveys. If new historical information becomes available or contamination is found at a non-impacted site, the site would be re-designated as radiologically impacted.
16. What is a radiologically controlled site?
 - a. A radiologically controlled site is an area where access is limited to individuals with the appropriate training and protective equipment to minimize potential exposure to radioactive material.

17. How will you decide where to scan and where not to scan?
 - a. The purpose of the upcoming in-home surveys is to identify radiological material that may be beneath a housing unit and pose a hazard inside the housing unit; therefore, the accessible, interior ground floor surfaces of all housing units will be scanned.
18. Who determines what levels of radiation are considered "safe"?
 - a. The Navy is working with the California Department of Public Health, using Federal regulations, national standards, and health physics best practices, to determine the level at which an exposure may pose an increased risk.
19. What are those "safe" radiation levels?
 - a. Many sources emit radiation that is well below or similar to natural background levels. While "safe" radiation levels are based on probability of cancer, it is extremely difficult to isolate cancer effects for sources that emit radiation similar to background levels. To be cautious, the Navy will work with the California Department of Public Health to evaluate potential risk to the resident(s) for survey readings in the housing units that are found to be above natural background. For units in which a source is identified that may result in a radiation dose of more than 10 mrem a year (above background), the Navy will work with the Treasure Island Development Authority to reduce the identified risk, which may involve resident relocation to a housing unit that has already been surveyed, cleared, and is available for their occupancy. Any survey readings that result in a radiation dose of less than 10 mrem a year (above background) are considered safe.
20. Are these radiation levels protective of my baby who lies on the floor throughout the day?
 - a. Yes, the established risk limits are calculated to protect all Treasure Island residents. The potential for risk from exposure to external gamma radiation in the housing units was assessed for individuals of all ages and both genders.
21. Can I see the results of all of your testing?
 - a. The Navy will process the survey results in coordination with the California Department of Public Health and provide the results to the Treasure Island Development Authority for distribution to the residents.
22. How long will it take to get my results and can I get them sooner?
 - a. The Navy will process survey results within two weeks from the date of the survey and then provide those results to the Treasure Island Development Authority for distribution. In order to accurately process the survey results, the information must be thoroughly reviewed and validated in coordination with the California Department of Public Health. It may be possible that survey results will be available sooner than the two week period.
23. Can I refuse you access to my home?
 - a. No, the Lease Agreement between the Navy and the City (the "Master Lease") includes provisions allowing access to the Navy to perform all investigatory and remedial work, and residents' leases are subject to the requirements of the Master Lease.
24. Do I need to be home and take time off work while you're surveying my property?
 - a. No, your presence during the survey is not required. Access to your home will be coordinated with your housing provider.
25. May I be present during the survey of my home?
 - a. Yes.
26. How can we be sure that future surveys won't find things that you didn't find now?
 - a. State of the art, highly sensitive, equipment and protocols will be used to detect radioactive material that may be beneath a housing unit. The equipment is capable of detecting sources much smaller than those that would pose a hazard to residents inside the house.
27. How are you going to ensure the accuracy of the results?
 - a. The Navy and the California Department of Public Health have agreed to use state of the art, highly sensitive, calibrated equipment to ensure accuracy of the surveys. The surveys and resultant data will be monitored and reviewed by the California Department of Public Health. The Navy will seek State of California concurrence.
28. How long will the surveying take?
 - a. It is estimated that the surveys will take approximately 2-4 hours per housing unit, but it will take approximately three months to survey all of the residences on Treasure Island.

29. Will I need to move anything in my home for you to do the surveys? My garage? Access to closets? Storage Units?
 - a. It would be helpful to remove items from the tops of your furniture and to make available as much floor space as possible. Navy contractors will move furniture as needed to accommodate data collection. Any furniture that is moved will be placed back in its original location. Where units have garages or outside storage lockers, the Navy contractors will need to survey the floor of those spaces. The contractor will temporarily move materials stored in these spaces to survey and return the materials when done.
30. When are you going to start the surveys?
 - a. The surveys are currently scheduled to begin on June 12, 2014.
31. Will people be allowed to remain in their homes after testing?
 - a. Yes. After the surveys are completed residents may continue with their normal activities, unless something is identified that requires additional investigation.

Communications Questions

32. Why is the Navy planning to do additional radiation investigations at Treasure Island?
 - a. Since 2006, the sampling and cleanup conducted on Treasure Island has been based on what we knew about the historical uses of radioactive materials and chemicals used on the former base. Based on a much more conservative evaluation process, fieldwork data, supplementary research and additional reviews of the historical reference materials; we have expanded the investigation to include additional areas.
33. How can I trust what you're telling me about my safety?
 - a. The Navy's protocols and the data are reviewed by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH). CDPH's overarching role in monitoring the Navy's work is to ensure the safety of human health and the environment. CDPH reviews the Navy's work plans to ensure that they are rigorous and reviews the data collected to ensure its validity. The surveys will also employ state of the art equipment capable of detecting exposures at very low levels.
34. I have been told the Navy didn't know until 2012 that it had done ship repair on Treasure Island. Is this true?
 - a. Although some historical documents had reported ship repair activities at the Frontier Base in the later portion of WWII, its significance did not become evident until after 2007 when radioluminescent items were first identified in the Solid Waste Disposal Areas (SWDAs). The SWDA's had already been designated as radiologically impacted because of the potential for radioluminescent materials to have been disposed in them during that era. The 2012 draft of the Historical Radiological Assessment – Supplemental Technical Memorandum represented an updated assessment of past base activities to which the Frontier Base operations during WWII was added. While we know the historical operations on the base, many of the activities that took place over 70 years ago and during war time are not well documented. As we complete cleanup activities, we continually learn more about the actual site conditions.
35. Some tenants had to sign documents acknowledging they couldn't disturb the soil. You clearly knew there were health concerns. How can the Navy now say, "But we didn't know"?
 - a. Cleanup actions can include controls like no digging. In this housing area, there is a restriction on digging that is part of the lease. This is a control measure that was put in place as part of the environmental cleanup of chemical contamination when the scope of radiological issues was less defined; however it provides a good protective measure for radiological objects as well.
36. The Navy states it cares about my health but how come its work is called a "Non-Time Critical Removal Action"?
 - a. There are three types of removal actions: (1) time critical removal actions (TCRAs), (2) emergency removal actions, and (3) non-time critical removal actions (NTCRAs). These categories are based on the type of situation, the urgency of the threat of the release, and the planning period that exists in which the action is initiated. TCRAs are those for which the planning period is six months or less before field work is initiated. Emergency removal

actions are necessary when there is a release that requires on-site activities to begin within hours or days. NTCRAs are taken when a removal action is determined to be appropriate, but a planning period of at least six months is available before on-site activities shall begin. The Navy has conducted this NTCRA in an expeditious manner while maintaining the protection of health of the residents.

37. How come there are no uniformed Navy personnel at these meetings?
 - a. With base closure, the operational Navy has been relocated. So while no “uniforms” are here, the Navy is committed to completing the cleanup and property transfers of this base and has a team of dedicated civilian employees to do just that.
38. Who should people talk to if they have questions or concerns? How will you address public comments?
 - a. Questions can be directed to Keith Forman, Navy BRAC Environmental Coordinator for Treasure Island, by calling (415) 308-1458. Information will also be provided through the BRAC PMO website located at http://www.bracpmo.navy.mil/brac_bases/california/former_ns_treasure_island.html, as well as at public meetings, in newsletters, etc.
 - b. Questions for the California Department of Public Health can be sent via email to the following special inbox set up for Treasure Island: treasureislandquestions@cdph.ca.gov
 - c. Questions for the Department of Toxic Substances Control can be directed to Medi Sunga, Project Manager, by calling (510) 540-3840.

Economic Questions

39. What will happen if the Navy determines that additional investigation or cleanup is necessary which requires that I and my family vacate our unit? Will I receive financial assistance or compensation?
 - a. The Treasure Island Development Authority has informed the Navy that it will work with the housing providers to accommodate any relocated tenants by making unoccupied housing units that have already been surveyed and cleared available for their occupancy. The Navy and the Treasure Island Development Authority will manage any necessary relocation action in accordance with the master lease agreement, Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act, and other applicable laws and regulations.
40. Is there a program that has been established allowing restitution to individuals who develop serious illnesses after the exposure to radiation from living here on Treasure Island?
 - a. Based on current data, there are no known public health hazards. If you believe you have been harmed, you have the right to file a claim under the Federal Tort Claims Act. You can contact any Navy Judge Advocate Generals (JAGs) office to request a form for filing a claim. This form is available in the "Packets & Forms" section of the Navy JAG website: www.navy.jag.mil.