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NJDEP CHANGES POLICY RELATED TO VAPOR INTRUSION POTENTIAL IN UNOCCUPIED BUILDINGS

Press Release

It was recently learned in updated information, provided as training to Licensed Site Remediation Professionals, that NJDEP has changed its policy with respect to contamination proximal to unoccupied structures at remediation sites. Vapor intrusion needs to be addressed at remediation sites when there are spills/discharges of constituents such as solvents, petroleum hydrocarbons, or other volatile organic compounds.

In training late last year, it had been stated that unoccupied structures did not have to be addressed with respect to vapor intrusion. In a more recent PowerPoint presentation to LSRPs, NJDEP said that future use of existing structures does have to be addressed at remediation sites.

RT is issuing this Email Blast because those managing site remediations who are not LSRPs, may not be aware of this fundamental change. There are a number of technical issues related to this change which include:

- It is easy to issue a policy, but the situation in the field can be different. There are technical difficulties in attempting to access boarded out structures which have no active utilities.
- It is well known that there is a "chimney effect", air going up the chimney can be displaced by air leaking in through basement wall joints, cracks in the floors, and walls. This can be exacerbated when there is frozen and/or snow covered or icy ground.
- The optimal time to collect readings and evaluate vapor intrusion is when these conditions are present and the heating systems are in operation. Obviously, this is not possible, when heating systems can't function or be turned on, because utilities are shut off in the building.

With perhaps thousands of such structures in New Jersey, RT would suggest that another option be given, such that where indoor air sampling is indicated, and/or where a building is boarded up, that a notice provision be given, such that the structure cannot be occupied, until appropriate vapor intrusion investigation work is

completed later. We think that this approach makes common sense, and is safer than the current approach, which is to spend significant sums of money on a particular structure and not be able to properly sample it for the future "occupied" condition.

For more information, call Gary R. Brown, P.E., President at (610) 265-1510 Ext. 234.



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