Fact Sheet

Naturally Occurring Asbestos

Air Quality Sampling

Air Quality Sampling
The replacement of Calaveras Dam will require the movement of more than 7 million cubic yards of rock and earth, a portion of which may contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA). Construction activities could cause asbestos fibers to become airborne, which could present a health concern. We have put into place an extensive dust control and air monitoring program to ensure that asbestos-containing dust does not leave the site at concentrations sufficient to pose unacceptable risks to workers or the public.

About Sampling
Air quality monitors have been strategically placed in and around the interior, perimeter, and outlying areas around the project site in concentric rings. These locations are designed to detect fugitive fibers at concentrations potentially capable of posing unacceptable risks.

The monitors act like small vacuums that suck in air through a very small filter for several hours (varying from 8 to 24) at a time. The filters are then taken to an offsite independent laboratory where a technician examines the filters with a microscope to count the amount of fibers present in the air quality sample. The results must then be reviewed again for quality control and assurance purposes. Results come back to the project team in 48 hours from the taking of the sample.

Samples are examined using transmission electron microscopy (TEM). Electron microscopes offer a high level of magnification and, unlike light microscopes, allow the analyst to distinguish between asbestos and non-asbestos fibers and even to distinguish between types of asbestos. These values generally are reported as detected asbestos structures per cubic centimeter of air collected (s/cc).

Results of Air Quality Sampling
We will post results from our regular air quality testing on a weekly basis on our website at: sfwater.org/sunolvalley

For More Information:
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