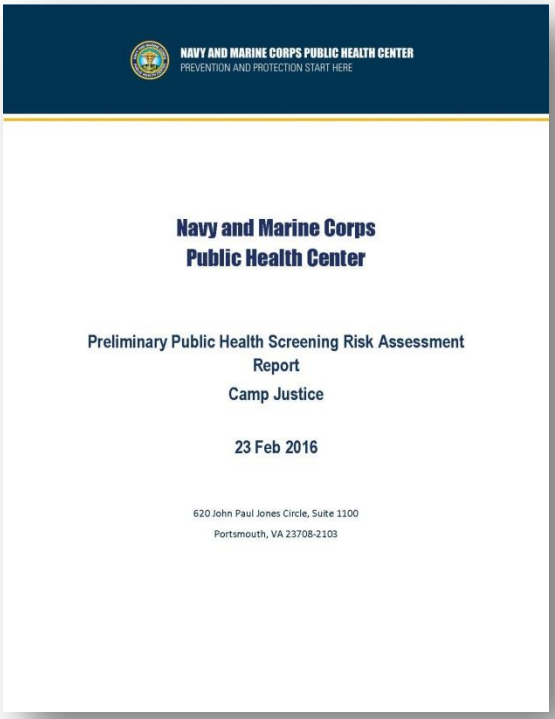
Camp Justice Preliminary Public Health Risk Assessment Report of 23 February 2016

Introduction

The following information is provided as part of a wide-ranging effort to understand potential health risks for our personnel serving at Camp Justice on Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (NSGB). Currently underway is a comprehensive Public Health Review (PHR) to assess potential health risks associated with living and working at Camp Justice. The risk assessment is being conducted in accordance with U. S. Environmental Protection Agency and U. S. Navy Risk Assessment Guidance. The epidemiological investigation is being conducted in accordance with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines. In line with our commitment to continually share important health information, we encourage you to review this fact sheet.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Preliminary Public Health Screening Risk Assessment Report
Camp Justice

23 Feb 2016

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Purpose

This preliminary public health screening report was performed to determine if any interim risk management actions need to be taken at this time to protect human health.

Findings

On 25-29 September 2015, Commander Navy Region Southeast (CNRSE) and the Navy and Marine Corps Public Health Center (NMCPHC) conducted a site visit to Camp Justice to develop an environmental investigation plan. Subsequently, CNRSE conducted a Phase I environmental assessment 11-14 October 2015. Samples of tap water, soil, indoor air, and building materials were collected and analyzed and several environmental reports were developed using these data.

NMCPHC conducted a preliminary public health screening risk assessment and found the vast majority of chemical concentrations detected at Camp Justice were less than their respective EPA Screening Levels. Mercury and formaldehyde in indoor air, and arsenic and benzo(a)pyrene in soil were determined to be of potential concern based on their concentrations and/or frequency of detection. While air concentrations of formaldehyde and mercury are below their respective Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs) for employee occupational exposure in the workplace, the concentrations measured exceeded EPA screening levels in a number of samples. An exceedance of an EPA screening level does not mean the conditions are unsafe, however, it does mean that further evaluation may be needed.

This preliminary report recommended the following risk management actions which to date have been completed and/or are in progress:

Formaldehyde in Modular Buildings (e.g., Cuzcos): A heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) consultant should evaluate the capacity of the existing air handling equipment to provide additional ambient air flow while maintaining acceptable temperature and humidity levels under maximal expected loads (complete awaiting laboratory analysis of formaldehyde resampling).

Mercury in Building AV-29: Testing results indicate that mercury concentrations for indoor air exceeded EPA Screening Levels (SLs). Samples were collected at cracks and crevices at floor level so were worst case screening measurements due to the building's history of once being a dental clinic. However, these data are not representative of, and are anticipated to be, much greater than actual occupational exposure concentrations in the breathing zone. Recommend resampling of indoor sampling for mercury to determine if mercury in the breathing zone is of concern. This will also inform the need for any further risk management actions (complete awaiting laboratory analysis of mercury resampling).

Arsenic in Soil: Soil data indicate that there are some locations throughout Camp Justice with arsenic concentrations that exceed SLs. However, arsenic concentrations in soil can be naturally occurring and/or can be enriched by human activities (e.g., applying arsenic based herbicides/pesticides). Recommend analyzing background samples for arsenic to determine what the naturally occurring concentrations of arsenic in soil are proximate to Camp Justice. This will inform the need for any further risk management actions (complete awaiting laboratory analysis of arsenic sampling).

Benzo(a)pyrene in Soil: The highest concentrations of benzo(a)pyrene were detected in soil adjacent to Building AV34, suggesting that there may have been a release (e.g., petroleum products) proximate to this building. Recommend performing additional site reconnaissance, at this building, to determine if additional soil samples should be collected, to inform the need for any further risk management actions (complete awaiting laboratory analysis of benzo(a)pyrene sampling).

In summary, these results are preliminary – not final. Final conclusions will not be made until all of the data for the Public Health Review (PHR) have been collected, analyzed and presented in the final PHR Report.