

Indoor Air Testing at Hanover Schools, Week of February 22

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will be conducting indoor air testing at the Hanover Public School and the St. John's School during the week of February 22.

Environmental site investigation is being conducted in Hanover

Until the early 1970s, the USDA operated a grain storage facility at the north end of Hanover. During this time, commercial grain fumigants containing carbon tetrachloride were commonly used by the USDA and private industry to preserve stored grain.

During site investigation work conducted by the USDA in 2007, carbon tetrachloride was detected at low levels in soils and indoor air samples and also in groundwater at and near the former USDA facility. The drinking water of city residents is not impacted, because the Washington County Rural Water District (RWD) #1 serves the area. No RWD wells are located near the former facility.

Low levels of carbon tetrachloride have been detected in indoor air at some Hanover homes

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), which is overseeing the USDA's work in Hanover, has determined that the carbon tetrachloride detections do not pose an immediate health hazard.

Hanover residents requested indoor air sampling in the schools

On October 29, KDHE and USDA representatives participated in a meeting of the Hanover Chamber of Commerce. Several citizens expressed concerns regarding indoor air at the schools, in view of the detection of carbon tetrachloride in homes to the north. The USDA and the KDHE agree that sampling in the schools is a prudent precautionary measure.



Plans for the school indoor air sampling program

The sampling will involve placing several small air canisters in rooms in each school during a normal school day. The results will be provided to the KDHE for distribution to the schools and the community. From the results, the KDHE will determine what the next steps should be.



Air sample canister

Radon sampling

Because of the detection of radon in some private homes, the USDA offered to conduct radon sampling in the schools. Radon is a naturally occurring substance that is known to be an issue in Washington County. The radon testing will be accomplished by placing small radon sampling kits in specified rooms of the schools.

Implementation by Dr. Blayne Hartman and Argonne National Laboratory

The USDA has retained the services of Dr. Blayne Hartman, a nationally recognized expert on indoor air issues, for planning and implementing the air sampling. Dr. Hartman will be assisted by representatives of Argonne National Laboratory. Argonne has been responsible for conducting all of the site investigation activities at Hanover for the USDA. Argonne is a nonprofit research facility near Chicago and is operated by UChicago, LLC, for the U.S. Department of Energy.

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