

January 24, 2003

Integrated Management Plan on CCA Treated-Wood Play Structures at City Playgrounds

The Study

- Toronto Parks and Recreation retained Decommissioning Consulting Services Limited to test arsenic levels, following detailed testing protocol developed in consultation with Toronto Public Health.
- A total of 217 locations, including 209 parks and 8 child-care centres were tested.
- The original inventory of 260 locations has been reduced through the playground replacement program, site decommissioning or the replacement of CCA-treated wood with alternative products.
- At each site, four soil samples were collected – one composite soil sample taken from 10 locations directly under the play structures, two soil samples in the playground area around the structure, and one control sample taken 10 metres from the play structure.
- The test results were compared against the Canadian Environmental Quality Guidelines for Soil (CCME 1999), which is 12 ug/g (parts/million).
- Surface samples were also collected from the surface of the play structures.
- Toronto Public Health recommends sealing those structures with elevated surface levels of arsenic.

Study Findings

- 31 parks were found to have levels of arsenic in the soil exceeding federal guidelines of 12 ug/g (parts per million) and would require sealing and removal of the material around the base of the structures.
- As a precautionary measure, it is recommended that play structures at 26 parks be sealed only, as surface samples of the play structures had elevated arsenic levels.
- A total of 57 parks require remedial action (see chart at end of Fact Sheet)
- No play structures at city-owned child care centres require remedial action.

The Integrated Management Strategy

- Upon approval by Budget Advisory Committee and Council, the play structures in all 57 playgrounds will be sealed with a polyurethane material. In addition, the base material of 31 playgrounds will be replaced. Total funding required is \$200,000.
- Signage will be posted at the affected playgrounds during construction.
- A consultant will be retained to conduct annual testing of the playground where remedial action has been taken. Immediate remedial action will be taken if the site exceeds the guidelines. This requires a funding request of \$25,000 per year, beginning in 2003.

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City of Toronto's Pro-active Approach to CCA-Treated Wood

- Since 2001, no new play structures were constructed with CCA-treated wood.
- Through the regular playground replacement program and the removal of CCA- treated components, the number of CCA-treated play structures has been reduced from 260 to 217.
- In August 2002, when potential arsenic contamination was identified at the High Park Adventure Playground, immediate remedial action was undertaken.
- In Fall 2002, a Consultant was retained to test soil samples at all CCA- treated play structures at City playgrounds and City-owned child care centres.
- The Report on the study findings and the recommended remedial plan and management strategy will be submitted to the Budget Advisory Committee on January 27 for review.
- If Budget Advisory Committee approves the report, it will be reviewed and forwarded to City Council at its meeting on February 4, 5 and 6.
- Once the report is approved, remedial action will begin and is scheduled to be completed before summer 2003.
- The list of affected parks is posted on the City web site at www.toronto.ca/parks
- A fact sheet on arsenic and CCA-Treated Wood is posted on the City website at www.toronto.ca/health
- Testing was conducted by Toronto Public Health at the community-owned Thorncrest playground. Arsenic levels were below the federal guidelines.

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