

To: ANC1B, SMD 1B03: Jamie Sycamore

From: The Department of General Services (DGS)

Date: January 25, 2023

Subject: Raymond Elementary School at the Meyer Swing Space: Environmental Safety Testing Result Notification

Commissioner Sycamore (ANC1B03):

The Department of General Services (DGS) takes our commitment to maintaining the health and safety of our residents seriously. One of our responsibilities is executing the Public Facilities Environmental Safety Amendment Act of 2020, which requires DGS to conduct proactive, routine lead testing of public recreation space with synthetic surfaces, including playgrounds. We write to you today to inform you about lead test results and related remediation from a school playground in your Single Member District.

During routine testing at Raymond Elementary School at Meyer Swing Space, one of the two playgrounds on the site (the one closer to the school parking lot) was found to have actionable lead test results within the Poured In Place (PIP) rubber-based material. As the Amendment Act requires, the site was closed on January 18 (within 24 hours of receipt of the sample analysis), and remediation took place over the weekend of January 21. The playground has been retested and we received the post-remediation test results January 23, showing lead levels below the 400ppm threshold. As a result, the playground was reopened on January 24.

Frequently Asked Questions

Where did the lead come from? The positive test result from the rinsed dust analysis (rinsate) means that the source of the lead on the PIP surface is likely from the surrounding environment, not the playground itself. For example, when it rains, a wide range of external chemicals may wash onto a playground surface, including from cars, lead-based paint, nearby construction, and other sources. It may then settle below the surface of the synthetic playground. It is important to remember that this means playground users would not be exposed to lead by touching the surface itself.

How did you test for lead at the playground? On-site evaluations included the following:

- XRF samples: Lead screening with X-Ray Fluorescence on site
- Bulk samples: Lead screening by washing bulk rubber samples from the playgrounds, separating the rinsate (i.e., bulk wash water) from the cleaned bulk playground material to evaluate the playground material separately from external chemicals. Only the bulk rinsate samples showed lead levels above the allowable threshold.
- Wipe samples: Lead screening at the surface to identify lead contained in the PIP that could transfer onto a playground user's hands, clothes, shoes, etc.

How was it fixed? Out of an abundance of caution, DGS and its vendor pressure washed and HEPA vacuumed the playground surface using a Trisodium Phosphate Solution (TSP) solution. Because the tests indicated lead was in the bulk rinsate and not in the PIP material itself, playground users would not be exposed to lead by touching the PIP surface itself. The playground was then retested, showing that the remediation actions produced satisfactory test results. The playground is now open for use.

What are the next steps? In accordance with the Public Facilities Environmental Safety Amendment Act of 2020, DGS will schedule regular public meetings to share environmental safety testing results with the community. Our first meeting is planned to take place in February and will include details about the environmental risks found, testing results and threshold levels for each risk, and remediation actions conducted at Raymond Elementary School at Meyer Swing Space. We will reach out to share specific details including the date, time, and location.

We appreciate your time and understanding of the work that we are doing to maintain the health and safety of those who use the playground at Raymond Elementary School. If you have questions, please contact Mike McLaughlin, DGS External Affairs at Michael.mclaughlin@dc.gov.