

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES



PRESS RELEASE

UPDATED - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

August 2, 2019

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Three Playgrounds Closed for Further Lead Safety Testing

Temporary Closures Effective August 2, 2019

(Washington, DC) – The Department of General Services (DGS) is taking proactive measures to test all District pour-in-place (PIP) playgrounds to determine the presence of elevated levels of lead. The agency maintains this commitment for the health, safety and well-being of all users of the District’s PIP playground surfaces. On Thursday, August 1, 2019, DGS received preliminary test results submitted by its certified industrial hygienist, SaLUT, for Aiton Elementary School, Cardozo High School and Thomson Elementary School. The initial results have returned elevated levels of lead at playgrounds from these locations.

Based on these findings, SaLUT recommends the temporary closure and further evaluation of these playgrounds. DGS, in partnership with DCPS, has determined to close a playground at Aiton Elementary School, the one playground at Cardozo High School and the top floor playground at Thomson Elementary School. DGS is moving forward with this recommendation as further evaluation is performed to understand the source of the lead and appropriate remediation. The playgrounds will be reopened once the issue has been fully addressed.

DGS will keep residents apprised of our work to address this matter and anticipates providing a remediation plan as soon as possible. The Aiton playground has already been slated for replacement and is anticipated to be completed before the start of the school session. DGS will employ all recommended safety measures during this process. Signage has been prominently posted at the playgrounds advising the public of closure. DGS has been in communication with its counterparts at DCPS throughout the entire process of PIP playground testing, and DCPS will likewise inform parent communities at these schools about these closures.

DGS is continuing testing protocols of all PIP playground surfaces in the District and is committed to complete this testing by January 2020. The testing methodologies being used for all District PIP playgrounds include:

- Lead screening with X-Ray Fluorescence (XRF)
- Collection of dust wipe samples
- Collection of bulk samples

- Laboratory analysis of bulk samples using Flame Atomic Absorption (Flame AA) on rinsate (wash) and cleaned bulk rubber material
- XRF of the collected dust-wipes
- Quality Control and Quality Assurance

Upon receipt, DGS will post SaLUT's final report onto its [website](#). The agency will continue to inform and update the public as new information and new test result analyses become available.

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The mission of the Department of General Services is to build, maintain and sustain the District of Columbia's real estate portfolio, which includes more than 191 million square feet of state-of-the-art facilities in Washington, DC. This work allows the agency to foster economic viability, environmental stewardship, and equity across all eight wards.