

COMMUNITY UPDATE

Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)

Environmental Investigations Update for Magnolia Elementary School

What is the project History?

The California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is overseeing an environmental investigation and clean-up activities associated with the former Ketema/AMETEK aerospace facility ("Ketema Site"), located at 790 Greenfield Drive in El Cajon, California. Past operations at the Ketema Site resulted in the release of chlorinated solvents, primarily trichloroethene (TCE), to the subsurface and eventually into groundwater. This groundwater is not currently used for drinking water or irrigation. Since 1987, the San Diego Water Quality Control Board and DTSC have overseen extensive investigation and clean-up efforts, including:

- Installation and testing of more than one hundred groundwater wells

- Extraction and treatment of groundwater and soil vapor from the former Ketema Site and the adjacent Magnolia Elementary School

- Application of an oxidation compound (permanganate) to break down and destroy TCE in groundwater

- Indoor air testing at the Ketema Site, Magnolia Elementary School, and nearby residences and mitigating potentially contaminated indoor air as a precaution where appropriate

Is Magnolia Elementary School Safe for Staff and Students?

Yes, since sampling of indoor air began in 1994, the DTSC has consistently concluded that the school is safe to occupy for both staff and students. As an added protective measure, AMETEK worked with the Cajon Valley Union School District to install sub-slab depressurization and air exhaust system units for all classrooms at Magnolia Elementary School. These units limit underlying soil vapors from entering indoor air. A vapor barrier was installed in the newly constructed classroom building.

How Can You Be Sure These Measures Are Working?

Soil vapor and indoor air testing has been conducted at the school since 1994. Testing occurs semi-annually in all classrooms, kindergarten rooms, the library, kitchen, auditorium, and administration office building. The most recent testing occurred on February 19th, 2024