



# San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

## SFDPH Response to San Francisco Chronicle

July 13, 2018

Dear Jason and Cynthia,

We have thoroughly reviewed and researched the questions you sent on June 27 regarding the history of Building 606 at the Hunters Point Shipyard. We have identified subject themes that the questions fell into, and we are providing responses based on those themes.

1. The relationship of Building 606 to the Shipyard cleanup and restoration
2. The condition of Building 606 and the health and safety of occupants
3. Background on the role of the San Francisco Department of Public Health in the Shipyard cleanup and restoration and Building 606

\*\*\*\*\*

### **1. The relationship of Building 606 to the Shipyard cleanup and restoration**

At the top, we would like to clarify a misapprehension that seems to run through several questions.

- *Building 606 does not contain hazardous materials and, therefore, is not part of the Navy’s cleanup and restoration of the Hunters Point Shipyard. The Navy cleanup activities in other parts of the Shipyard do not expose police employees who work in that building to hazards. This is a fundamental misunderstanding that we wanted to clear up.*
- *Your questions seem to suggest that the mere presence of hazards elsewhere at the Shipyard or under the ground result in exposure and therefore risk to the occupants of Building 606. That is not accurate.*
- *The suggestion that the ongoing cleanup activities at the Shipyard pose a health risk to Building 606 occupants is mistaken. Navy documents about Building 606 and nearby areas - specifically the Building 606 Finding of Suitability to Lease (FOSL), reports of former buildings 503, 507 and 508, detection of chemicals and radiation in soil, and the summary of results of the Navy’s Human Health Risk Assessment (HHRA) appropriately identify known*



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

*areas in the vicinity of Building 606 that are part of the Navy remediation effort. However, this information does not equate to an increased cancer risk for the occupants of Building 606.*

*The purpose of the FOSL is to document why the building is suitable for lease, that the uses contemplated for the lease are consistent with protection of human health and the environment and that the Navy is committed to continuing its remedial action at the Shipyard property. The FOSL identifies conditions and rules for safe occupancy of the area. In order to explain why the occupants are safe, it is necessary to explain hazards, exposure and risk.*

*There are hazards at the Shipyard due to Navy industrial activities in the past that created contamination. The Navy's cleanup and restoration entails identifying and removing the hazards.*

*The Navy's cleanup is required by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). It requires the Navy to take all remedial action to protect human health and environment before it transfers the property. It also requires the Navy to determine, as it did in the FOSL for Building 606, that any leased property is safe for its intended uses. Two of the steps in the CERCLA remediation process are the sampling of chemical/radiological contamination and risk modeling.*

*The Navy's risk modeling is a mathematical tool for planning what areas need restoration. The risks cited in your questions are from the models used to assess whether there might be a risk in the future if all of these conditions are present:*

- 1) a particular chemical or detection of radiation (a hazard) were left in soil after transfer at the levels detected during the Navy investigations;*
- 2) the chemicals/radiation are distributed uniformly in the area being studied (e.g. the size of a residential lot); and*
- 3) a population of humans were to ingest, inhale or have skin contact with that soil (have an exposure) every day for 30 years.*

*These risk models are a key part of the restoration (CERCLA) process. They inform where cleanup will take place. But they are not applicable to determining risk to the occupants of Building 606. The calculated risk numbers do not represent an individual's cancer risk. Nor do they apply to any past or present population.*



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

*For example, you cited Navy calculated cancer risks for detections of radium-226 and cesium-137 near former buildings 507 and 508. The cited risks near these two buildings are either underneath the asphalt within the Building 606 leased premises or outside the lease premises behind a fence. The occupants of Building 606 have no exposure to the dirt with these detections, so there is no risk.*

*In 2016, the EPA issued a formal [Fact Sheet](#) (document # 100005373) about the Building 606 area and other areas of the Shipyard that are leased by the artists. The EPA reviewed existing information and concluded that all the tenants, including those at Building 606, are safe from exposure and therefore not at risk.*

*In summary, Building 606 is safe because occupants are not exposed to hazardous substances and therefore not at risk.*

### **2. The condition of Building 606 and the health and safety of occupants**

#### *Building 606 is safe for occupants.*

- *Building 606 was built in 1989, long after the radiological activities at the Shipyard had concluded. Construction of Building 606 entailed the excavation of soil down to 5.5 feet below the building, placing of a foundation, and constructing a brand new building on top.*
- *The Health Department's industrial hygienists assigned to the Police Department received and followed up on employee concerns about health and safety that were typical of issues found in buildings that had been unoccupied, as Building 606 was for several years prior to Police taking occupancy. In every case, the building was found to be safe.*
- *It is very important that the past and current occupants of Building 606 know that they were and are safe, and that there is no evidence of exposure to health hazards related to the Shipyard cleanup in that building. Because there is no exposure, there is no risk.*

### **3. Background on the role of the San Francisco Department of Public Health in the Shipyard cleanup and restoration, and Building 606**



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

*The Health Department plays two roles at this location.*

### *1 – Shipyard Cleanup and Restoration*

*The mission of the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) is to protect and promote health and well-being for all in San Francisco. SFDPH supports the City’s voter approved mandate for “timely development” of the Hunters Point Shipyard and Candlestick project (Proposition G 2008). This new development will add approximately 12,000 housing units - a third of which will be affordable. Before the housing can be developed on the land, the Navy, as required by CERCLA, must complete the cleanup and restoration under the oversight of three regulatory agencies: US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), California/EPA Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) and the San Francisco Bay Area Regional Water Quality Control Board (SFRWQCB). As each parcel is complete, the Navy writes a Finding of Suitability for Transfer that all three regulatory agencies must concur with before the land is transferred to the San Francisco Office of Community Investment and Infrastructure (OCII).*

*An SFDPH **Environmental Engineer** has been assigned to this project since 1993, during the Navy restoration and the redevelopment by Lennar/Fivepoint on transferred land. SFDPH reviews information from the Navy and the regulatory agencies and helps to verify that the restoration and transfer will continue to protect public health. In addition, once the property transfers, SFDPH implements Article 31 of the San Francisco Health Code to ensure that the redevelopment is done in a safe manner, consistent with all federal and state regulatory requirements.*

### *2 – Building 606 Health and Safety*

*SFDPH assigned an **Industrial Hygienist (IH)** to support the San Francisco Police Department’s (SFPD) employee health and safety since 1997. While some City Departments have their own industrial hygienists, City departments like SFPD that do not typically engage in industrial-type activities often seek assistance from SFDPH for employee safety issues. The IH was based at Building 606 for many years, where they investigated any concerns raised by SFPD employees there. The IH also reviewed Navy information about the restoration work, with guidance from the Environmental Engineer. The IH also supported SFPD employees at other sites.*

*Industrial hygiene is the science of protecting and enhancing the health and safety of people at the workplace. Health and safety hazards cover a wide range of chemical, physical, biological and*



# San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

*ergonomic stressors. The role of an Industrial Hygienist (IH) is to anticipate, recognize, evaluate and control those hazards. They are professionals dedicated to the well-being of the workers.*

*Your questions cover some of the investigations that were conducted by the IH assigned to Building 606. In every case, the building was found to be safe. Both the Environmental Engineer and the Industrial Hygienist held meetings for the SFPD employees to address concerns and answer questions. The Health Department is committed to the health and safety of all San Francisco residents and visitors, and has worked diligently to ensure that the occupants of Building 606 are safe.*

## **Additional information in response to questions about Building 606 health and safety**

### *The Building 606 lease provides important information*

*SFDPH was not a party to the Building 606 lease. However, it is important to understand that the lease contains restrictions on the use of the lease area and notices about the Navy’s ongoing investigations, cleanup and restoration surrounding the area. Those restrictions and notifications are part of the lease terms and contribute to everyone’s (including the future tenants) knowledge and understanding that assure the safety of the tenants.*

### *The Industrial Hygienists were assigned to support SFPD employees*

*From 1997 to the present nine Industrial Hygienists (IHs) have been assigned to the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) at Building 606. During this period, eight of the nine IHs assigned to SFPD left their assignments at Building 606 for a variety of reasons:*

- *Received promotions to new positions within CCSF* 2
- *Accepted a position in the private sector* 1
- *Released during their probationary period* 2
- *Accepted a position with the Federal Government* 1
- *Bumped from the position as a result of layoffs* 1
- *Service retirement* 1
- *Currently serving the assignment* 1

*The role of the IHs assigned to Building 606 was and continues to be the investigation of health and safety concerns reported by SFPD employees on site, to evaluate potential risk to health and safety, and to recommend corrective actions as needed at Building 606.*

*There are no records of any of the IHs assigned to Building 606 requesting a transfer.*



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

### Scanning Building 606 for radiation found no exposure, test was appropriate

*The purpose of the monitoring conducted by the first Industrial Hygienist, Hillary Stoermer, as documented in her May 19, 1997 report, was to determine if there was a presence of radiation in Building 606 that presented a health hazard for the occupants. Her survey was not designed to address soil remediation or site cleanup activities being conducted by the Navy or contractors at Hunters Point Shipyard.*

*Measurements taken during the 1997 survey indicated that radiation was not present in Building 606.*

*The method selected to monitor for the presence of radiation in the building was a direct-reading Victoreen Thyac V Survey Meter (model 190) with a Geiger-Muller (GM) tube (pancake style probe). This type of instrument is widely used for radiation surveys because of its portability and ease of use as a field meter. The instrument also has a wide operating range of 1 micro-Roentgen per hour to +1 Roentgen per hour. With the GM tube, the meter was able to detect possible radiologic emissions at Building 606, including gamma radiation, as well as alpha and beta particles. In addition, the pancake style GM probe is ideal for detecting very low radiation levels caused by materials deposited on surfaces, potentially present in settled dust at Building 606 if radiation had been present. The Victoreen 1920 was the appropriate instrument for the general survey performed by Ms. Stoermer on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1997.*

### The Ochi memo is a best practice

*For clarification it should be noted that Mr. Ochi's December 3, 1997 memo was a "lessons learned" document that listed issues addressed by the SFDPH as it worked with the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency (SFRA) and SFPD on Building 606. This document represents a best practice to ensure that such issues could be avoided in the future if the City and County of San Francisco (CCSF) were to take the responsibility and occupancy of other buildings on the Hunters Point Shipyard site.*

*In response to employee concerns, Mr. Ochi and his predecessor identified several issues to be addressed (indoor air quality, drinking water, dust control, building maintenance, site infrastructure and physical security).*



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

*In addition to his comprehensive assessment of the identified issues, Mr. Ochi offered robust recommendations that were implemented from 1997 and have continued as needed to the present. Identifying potential issues, assessment of potential hazards, and providing recommendations for corrective actions as needed is the function of the Industrial Hygienist.*

### *Communication was frequent and well documented*

*In 1997, Mr. Ochi increased communication with the Navy, its remediation contractors, and shared his findings with onsite SFPD employees, SFPD Command Staff, and SFRA via written activity updates and verbal communication. He participated in meet and confer sessions with SFPD Command Staff and the Police Officers Association (POA) to address all safety concerns reported by onsite employees. Mr. Ochi also started the Building 606 Safety Committee to create a forum for people at Building 606.*

*In addition to regular memos and reports, SFDPH staff conducted in-service presentations to respond to specific employee concerns. SFDPH IHs maintained an office at Building 606 and were available to respond to employee concerns. A review of the documents generated by the nine IHs assigned to Building 606 indicates that when concerns were raised, they were investigated, characterized by type via sampling or observation, and recommendations (when needed) for corrective actions were provided. The record also shows communication with SFPD employees, their on-site captain, SFPD Command Staff, and SFRA.*

*From 1997 up to the present, investigation and sample results indicated that there were no appreciable health risks for employees working in Building 606.*

### *The drinking water was tested and not dangerous*

*In response to onsite employee concerns regarding drinking water (tap water) at Building 606, Industrial Hygienists took samples and issued reports from 1997 to 1999. The water was always found to be safe. The issue was resolved by the flushing of pipes, which is recommend in buildings that have not been used for a period of time, as was the case when the SFPD took occupancy of Building 606.*

*Here is a brief chronology:*



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

- *February 1997 – SFPD moves in to Building 606*
- *March 6, 1997 – water samples collected by IH in response to employee concerns. Sample results did not exceed Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) established by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).*
- *March 24, 1997-- report entitled "Drinking Water Sample Results, Building 606, Hunters Point Shipyard" concluded that "drinking water at building 606, Hunters Point Shipyard, does not pose a health hazard to any employees drinking it, and does not appear to have been impacted by surrounding contaminated groundwater."*
- *April 1, 1998 - memo regarding water quality at Building 606 provided a chronology of water sampling activity from March 1997 through January 1998. Although results indicate potable water supplies contained various contaminants, subsequent investigation indicated that the presence of these contaminants could be attributed to the piping and water systems at Building 606, which had not been flushed at the time of SFPD occupancy in February 1997.*
- *Note: During this same period the Navy also provided advisories to all HPS tenants regarding potential for lead in the base-wide water supply that was attributed to standing water in long unused water systems (approximately six years) onsite. Recommendations included letting the water from taps run 30 seconds before drinking or cooking when faucet has not been used for over six hours.*
- *April 15, 1997—additional water samples collected to determine whether bacteria was in the water supply at Building 606. Sample results were negative for bacteria in the water supply.*
- *April 30, 1997 – bottled water provided to Building 606 to respond to ongoing employee concerns, even though the tap water was deemed safe for consumption. Bottled water provision continued to present day.*
- *June 10, 1997 - Department of Public Works plumbers recommended that the piping and water systems at Building 606 be completely flushed.*
- *June 1997 – water samples collected by the IH*
- *July 1997 – water samples collected by the SF Water Department*
- *August 1997 – water samples collected by the SF Water Department*
- *September 1997 - water samples collected by IH*
- *October 1997- water samples collected by IH*
- *January 1998- water samples collected by the SF Water Department.*
- *September 28, 1999- water samples collected by IH. The sample results did not exceed any of the MCLs established by the EPA. These results suggest that flushing the pipes and water systems at Building 606 was the appropriate corrective action.*



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

- *November 5, 1999 - summary memo to the Chief of SFPD, the IH wrote "It is believed the increased water usage since moving in has "flushed" any impurities out of the system."*

*Based on the conclusions of the sample data collected from 1997 through 1999, the IHs assigned to Building 606 determined that no short term or long term health risks were associated with use of the water at Building 606. These findings were shared with onsite employees and SFPD Command Staff.*

*Dust was studied and found to be safe, information was readily available*

*In 2006 and 2007, the SFDPH IH was addressing the air quality concerns of police employees prompted by the excavation of the bedrock and soil on the Parcel A hilltop. That work increased the amount of mud and dust on the roads that the SFPD employees traveled on to get to work.*

*SFDPH's Environmental Engineer's role included ensuring that Lennar, the developer on Parcel A, was complying with dust control requirements in their SFDPH approved Article 31 Dust Control Plan (DCP). Those requirements are best practices for construction. On several occasions, Lennar was issued Notices of Violation and the violations were corrected promptly by Lennar.*

*During this time period, air monitoring by the SFDPH IH was an added precaution to verify to the employees that the area was safe. The memos written by the IH indicate that the IH was keeping the employees informed.*

*In addition, the Navy held regular community meetings that were widely advertised. Both the IH and the Environmental Engineer received notices about those Navy meetings and it was a usual practice for meeting notices to be posted in Building 606 so SFPD employees were aware of them. The Navy also distributed their contact information and regularly encouraged any interested party to send their email address so that they could be added to the Navy's email distribution to receive notices of the Navy community meetings.*

*The 2018 sewage system repair work was done with Tetrattech fraud in mind*

*Prior to repairs to the sewer system behind Building 606 in 2018, SFDPH's Environmental Engineer assisted the Navy and SFPD in planning for the repairs and asked the same questions you*



## San Francisco Department of Public Health

Barbara A. Garcia, MPA  
Director of Health

City and County of San Francisco  
London N. Breed  
Mayor

*are asking. The parties worked together to review the concerns about the Tetrattech fraud in light of the sewer project.*

*The Navy and SFDPH conducted a field visit with SFPD and their construction crew on December 7, 2017 for the new excavation to verify that it was at least five feet away from any of the trenches and backfill near Building 606 that will be reinvestigated as part of the Navy's commitment to redo the work that was improperly conducted by Tetrattech. Regulatory guidance for another non-Navy HPS excavation project required excavations to be at least five feet distance from the trenches where Tetrattech had conducted work.*

*Note: In documents that were released to you (in July 2018), there are emails and figures that demonstrate how all parties reviewed specific evidence about the areas where the previous excavations were cut by Tetrattech near Building 606, to make certain the new excavation happened at a safe distance from the older Tetrattech excavations.*

In summary, based on all the reviews SFDPH has conducted and the independent sampling conducted by the SFDPH IH, it is safe for employees to occupy Building 606. The building's safety was also attested to by the EPA in its 2016 Fact Sheet, mentioned above.

Sincerely,

Rachael Kagan  
Director of Communications, San Francisco Department of Public Health

Cc: Dr. Tomas Aragon, San Francisco Health Officer  
Anne Pearson, Deputy City Attorney

---