



Air Testing

Alliance Air Testing: 2005 – 2007

The West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs is a network of neighbors; businesses; and environmental, social justice, and children's organizations allied to preserve safe jobs while preventing noxious pollution in West Berkeley and the East Bay.

Independent Air Pollution Tests

West Berkeley Alliance for Clean Air and Safe Jobs volunteers, with the guidance of Global Community Monitor, tested for air pollution near Pacific Steel Casting Company in West Berkeley. Alliance community testing was independent; only local grassroots community members funded and conducted tests. In 2005, the Alliance checked levels of formaldehyde, a noxious gas. Then the Alliance tested for toxic dust fallout in 2006. Global Community Monitor (GCM) secured funding from the Bay Area Air Quality Management District to coordinate ongoing testing in 2007.

Timeline of Tests and Results

July 2005

An Alliance volunteer captures a sample of the air during an odor episode by the Pacific Steel Casting facility. The laboratory finds formaldehyde in the air 24 times higher than the EPA region VI screening threshold.

July 2006

The Alliance hosts a training by Global Community Monitor to teach community volunteers how to test for pollution in soot/dust. The search for donations to support testing begins. The donations are solely from independent, grassroots, local community donors.

August 2006

Integrating EPA guidelines and GCM suggestions, the Alliance publishes instructions for proper testing to the Alliance website. With sufficient funds, volunteer testers receive these instructions and materials to conduct testing. Many thanks to all testers and donors!

September 2006

All volunteers and funds are located and testing occurs at seven locations surrounding Pacific Steel. The tests are sent off to the lab for analysis, available the next month.

October 2006

The one upwind and six downwind tests are analyzed for Arsenic, Beryllium, Cadmium, Chromium, Copper, Lead, Manganese, Mercury, Nickel, Selenium, and Zinc. The lab analysis reveals levels of many of these potentially harmful substances at most test sites, upwind site excepted. Lead levels at two sites near Pacific Steel exceed some safety thresholds.

Spring 2007

The Alliance has completed air testing. This year Bay Area Air Quality Management District provides funding for Global Community Monitor to conduct ongoing air testing with Berkeley environmentalists.

Additional Resources

Alliance: Pollution Test Facts http://www.westberkeleyalliance.org/docs/wbaenglish/pollution_test_facts.pdf

EPA: Wipe Test Guidelines http://www.epa.gov/wtc/panel/pdfs/5-att-2_hud_lead_wipe_sampling.pdf

Global Community Monitor: <http://www.gcmonitor.org>

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