

CITY OF BALTIMORE

SHEILA DIXON, Mayor



HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Commissioner
210 Guilford Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21202

For Immediate Release

Media Contact: Ingrid Antonio Tel: 443-984-2623

Email: Ingrid.Antonio@baltimorecity.gov

Swann Park Closed Until Further Notice

BALTIMORE, MD (April 19, 2007) —On the recommendation of the Baltimore City Health Department and the Maryland Department of the Environment, the Baltimore City Parks and Recreation Department is closing Swann Park in South Baltimore. Earlier today, test results indicated elevated levels of arsenic in the soil at the park.

Swann Park is located next to a site where arsenic was used in the manufacture of chemicals for many years. A task force that included federal, state, and city health officials permitted the park to open in the mid-1970s. Additional testing was conducted this month in response to an inquiry from the Maryland Department of the Environment.

The test results found arsenic levels ranging from 23 to 2,200 parts per million. These levels raise a potential concern for human health. Chronic exposure to arsenic has been associated with nervous system effects, skin changes and various forms of cancer. The level of risk to health depends on the type of arsenic, the type of exposure, and other chemical and environmental factors.

In response to these findings:

1. **Swann Park is closed to the public until further notice.** The Parks and Recreation Department is posting signs at the park. Recreational activities planned for the park will be rescheduled elsewhere, including Carroll, Patterson, and Latrobe Parks.
2. **At the request of the Baltimore City Health Department, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease will conduct an assessment of the risk to human health of arsenic at Swann Park.** This agency has conducted many similar assessments around the country. The assessment of Swann Park should be completed within several weeks. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease will advise on the level of risk to health, recommendations for access to the park, and recommendations for human health surveillance.
3. **Working with the Maryland Department of the Environment, Baltimore City and Honeywell International will conduct a more thorough environmental assessment and plan for necessary remediation activities.** Honeywell has taken over the responsibilities of Allied Chemical, which ran the manufacturing facility at the site.

It is unlikely that exposure to Swann Park could cause arsenic poisoning. City residents with questions about Swann Park should call 311. Questions on activities at the park will be directed to the Parks and Recreation Department. Questions on health will be directed to the Health Department. Clinical providers with questions should contact the Baltimore City Health Department or the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

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