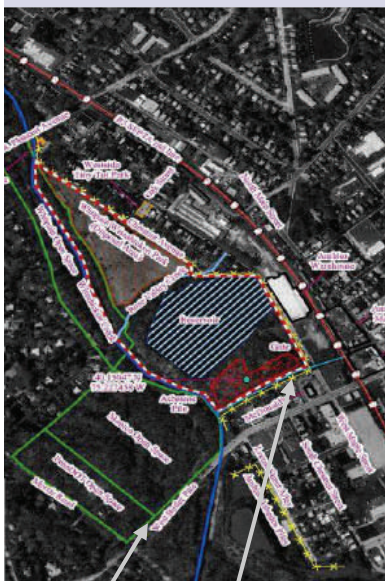




About the Borit Asbestos Site

The Site consists of three distinct asbestos-contaminated areas along Maple Street just west of Butler Pike in Ambler. The areas were commonly referred to as the East Maple Street Pile (now called the Borit Asbestos Pile), the West Maple Street Pile (now a closed park known as the Whipnain Wissahickon Park), and a reservoir. The piles were a result of disposal of waste product from operations of the facility. Portions of the site were covered with soil in the mid-60's and most of the property is vegetated.



Butler Pike

West Maple Ave

Borit Asbestos Site Border ●●●

Summary

In response to community concerns, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), a federal public health agency, prepared a health consultation that evaluates cancer incidence in communities near the Borit Asbestos site and whether or not there is an elevated rate of asbestos-related cancer in the community. The Montgomery County Health Department (MCHD) performed a separate analysis of the same questions, using a different method and looking at a different, larger geographic area than PADOH and ATSDR. The MCHD findings are summarized later in this Fact Sheet.

⇒ **ATSDR and PADOH believe cases of mesothelioma are most likely due to exposures that occurred in the past when the asbestos facilities were operating and exposing workers and possibly household contacts of these workers.** Most cases of mesothelioma are diagnosed 30 years or more after the first exposure to asbestos, and the increase seen is most likely due to exposures that occurred in the 1970's or earlier.

⇒ **Recent air sampling results collected at and near the Borit Asbestos site indicates that residents in that community are not currently being exposed to asbestos at a level of health concern.** This information is evaluated in a July 9, 2008 Health Consultation and available on the internet at: www.epaossc.net/sites/2475/files/borithealthconsult_-_air_data_reviewpubcomment7-08.pdf

⇒ Residents of Ambler shared with these health agencies anecdotal information with the health agencies of individuals from the community with asbestos-related illnesses. Despite efforts to pursue this information, to date we have been unable to confirm any cases of asbestos-related disease in Ambler residents who did not work with asbestos in the past or were not a close contact of an asbestos worker. Asbestos-related non-cancer diseases (e.g. asbestosis) were not investigated in this review because they are not currently a reportable disease in Pennsylvania. Therefore, PADOH's ability to evaluate the rate of asbestosis or other non-cancerous asbestos-related diseases in the community is very limited.

PADOH Cancer Review Area

The PADOH and ATSDR reviewed the number of cancer cases reported in the three zip codes closest to the Borit site and compared these numbers to those reported in the Commonwealth as a whole. PADOH and ATSDR concluded:

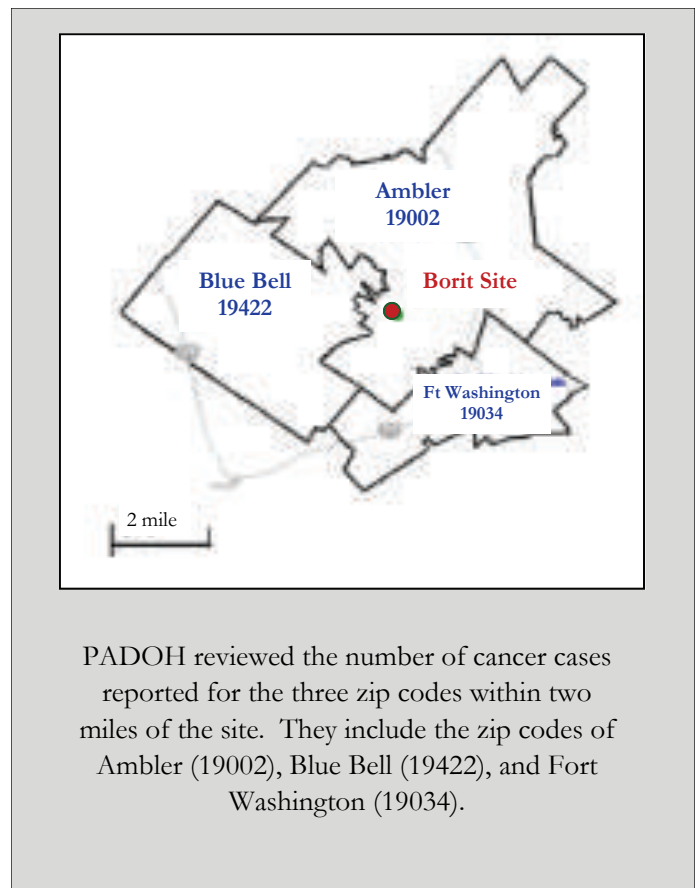
- None of the types of cancer that are typically associated with exposure to asbestos are higher than expected (i.e. not statistically significant).
- Mesothelioma, the cancer most closely associated with asbestos exposure, was seen at an increased rate in the Ambler zip code. However, the elevated rate was not *statistically* significant.
- Lung and bronchus (the airways leading to the lungs) cancer, also linked to asbestos exposure, was found to occur less often than would be expected in all three zip codes closest to the site. The low incidence rate was statistically significant.

Statistical significance means that the identified rates are unlikely to be due to “normal variation” or “chance”.

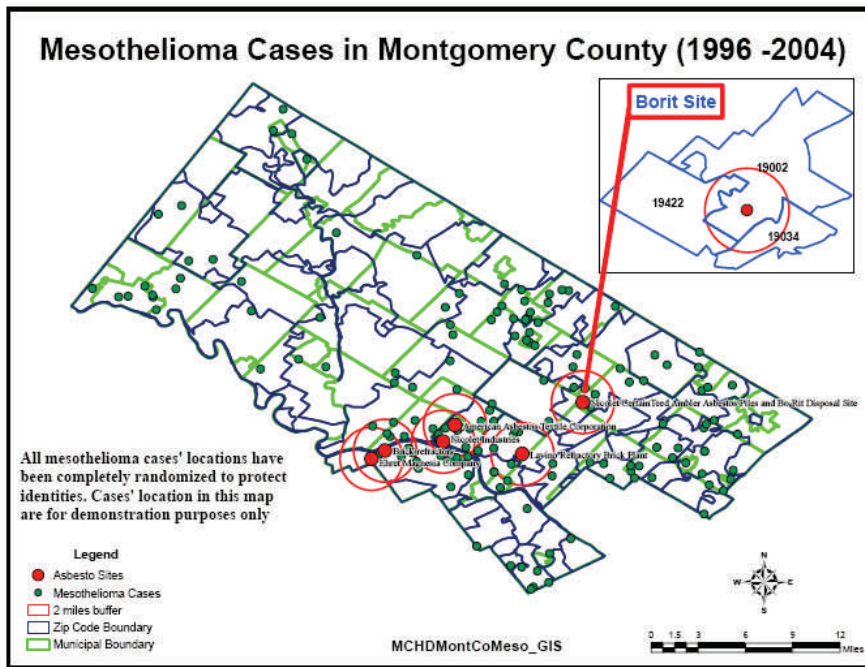
Limitations of Cancer Data Reviews

There are many limitations to any statistical analysis that examines the relationship between environmental exposures and chronic diseases such as cancer:

- The quality of the analysis is directly related to the accuracy of the information in the reporting system. Pennsylvania is considered to have a highly reliable cancer registry.
- This cancer data review can only determine whether there is an abnormal rate of cancer in the study area. Cause and effect relationships cannot be established because other factors may contribute to the observation. These include heredity, lifestyle, exposures from other sources, and occupational exposures.
- The cancer registry uses only the residence of the individual at the time he or she was diagnosed with the disease. Information on previous residence and length of residency are not included in the cancer registry. Population mobility and changes in population could affect the results of this analysis.
- Since mesothelioma and lung cancer can take decades to develop, the current health outcome data reflect past exposures and may not correspond to current site conditions.



MCHD Mesothelioma Review Area



MCHD's six historical asbestos sites:

- Borit Site or Keasby and Mattison Company or Certainteed and Nicolet Indust. Ambler
- Ehret Magnesia Company Valley Forge Park
- Nicolet Industries Washington Street in Norristown
- Brick refractory Mancill Mill Rd in Upper Merion Twp
- Lavino Refractor Co. (later Kaiser) Chemical Road in Plymouth Twp
- American Asbestos Textile Corp. (later Amatex Corp.) Stanbridge St in Norristown

The MCHD evaluated mesothelioma incidence rates in the 2 miles surrounding six historic asbestos manufacturing sites in Montgomery County (the Ambler site and 5 other former sites). **MCHD found that residents living within a 2-mile radius of all six historical asbestos sites combined have a statistically higher incidence rate of mesothelioma (cancer of the lining of the lungs) for men only, when compared to county residents living outside the combined 2-mile zones.** The MCHD study is not comparable to the PADOH and ATSDR review, as different methods were used and different geographic areas were assessed. The MCHD study cannot be used to determine rates around the Borit site alone.

Could I Have Been Exposed To Asbestos?

Former workers are most at risk for asbestos-related disease.

Workers may have been exposed to asbestos anywhere in and around the plants.

Workers who were exposed may have brought asbestos fibers home on their clothes, shoes, and bodies. *Therefore, people who lived with former workers could have been exposed to asbestos.* Even handling and washing a worker's clothes could have exposed someone to asbestos.

Former residents who lived near a plant may have been exposed to asbestos.

Unfortunately, we do not have enough information on past air quality to adequately evaluate past community exposures.

- Community members who engaged in activities on the site that stirred up the asbestos or the asbestos contaminated soils (e.g. sledding or playing on the waste piles) might have breathed in air containing asbestos fibers.
- If dust and asbestos fibers were released into the air while the plant was in operation (as reported in some areas as dust on cars parked near the plant), people living within a few blocks from the plant might have breathed in air that contained elevated levels of asbestos.

IMPORTANT!

If You Are Concerned...

Inform your doctor.

Even if you don't feel sick, tell your doctor that you might have been exposed to asbestos.

Most people don't show any signs or symptoms of asbestos-related disease for 10 to 20 years or more after exposure.

A doctor can help you find out if you have any health problems due to asbestos exposure.

How Can Asbestos Exposure Affect Your Health?

A condition called asbestosis can develop from breathing high levels of asbestos fibers for a long time and may result in scar-like tissue in the lungs and in the lining that surrounds the lung. This condition is usually found in workers exposed to asbestos, but not in the general public.

Changes in the lining of the lungs (pleura) such as thickening, plaques, calcification, and fluid around the lungs (pleural effusion) may be early signs of asbestos-related disease. These changes can affect breathing more than previously thought. Pleural effusion can be an early warning sign for mesothelioma.

Research has shown a clear link between exposure to asbestos and respiratory cancers (cancer of the lungs and mesothelial lining) in humans. However, the link between exposure to asbestos and other types of cancers is less clear. Some studies suggest an association between gastrointestinal and colorectal cancers and asbestos exposure.

Factors influencing the potential for health effects:

- * People are more likely to experience asbestos-related health effects when they are exposed to high concentrations of asbestos or are exposed for longer periods of time.
- * Smoking or cigarette smoke, together with exposure to asbestos, greatly increases the likelihood of lung cancer.
- * Most cases of asbestosis or lung cancer in workers occur 15 years or more after the person was first exposed to asbestos. Also, most cases of mesothelioma are diagnosed 30 years or more after the first exposure to asbestos.
- * Health effects from asbestos exposure may continue to progress even after exposure is no longer happening.

Future Steps

PADOH, ATSDR, and MCHD will present the findings to the community. In addition, a copy of the full health consultation is available for review:

- * on the EPA website at www.epaosc.net/borit
- * at the EPA field office located at 324 West Maple Avenue in Ambler
- * at the Ambler branch of the Wissahickon Valley Public Library at 209 Race Street in Ambler

ATSDR, MCHD, and PADOH will work with the community to develop next steps in addressing the public health issues relating to the sites.

ATSDR and PADOH:

- ⇒ will continue to share information with local health care providers.
- ⇒ remain available to evaluate future environmental sampling results.
- ⇒ remain interested in learning of individuals with non-work related asbestos disease who live in the community.
- ⇒ will update the health outcome data as appropriate and when indicated.

Contact Information

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

Region 3 Office
Lora Siegmann-Werner
(215) 814-3141 or
Dr Karl Markiewicz
(215) 814-3149
www.atsdr.cdc.gov

Pennsylvania Department of Health

Health Assessment Program
Dr Mark White
Barbara Allerton
or
Christine Lloyd
(717) 346-3283

Montgomery County Health Department

Harriet Morton
(610) 278-5117 ext 6705

Environmental Protection Agency

Region 3 Office
On-scene Coordinator
Eduardo Rovira
(215) 814-3436 or
Community Involvement Coordinator
Francisco Cruz
(215) 814-5528
www.epaosc.net/borit

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection

Southeast Regional Office
Tim Cherry
(484) 250-5728 or
Lynda Rebarchak
(484) 250-5820

This fact sheet was supported by funds from the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act trust fund through a cooperative agreement with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services