

ANIAK WHITE ALICE SITE

HISTORY

The Aniak Middle School building and property was initially developed and used by the Air Force in the 1950s in the military/civilian “White Alice” communication system during the Cold War. By the late 1970s the military facility was obsolete and was turned over to the School District, which renovated the main building and used it for a school from 1981 until 2003. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has owned the property since 1965 and currently leases the site to the Kuskokwim School District and AT&T Alascom.

TIMELINE

1950's:

During White Alice operations and renovation of the school by contractors, fluids containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) were spilled in and around the generator room and onto the ground outside the building, resulting in soil contamination. Hazardous materials were placed into drums that were moved to various locations on the property, where additional spills reportedly occurred. Most of those drums were ultimately shipped to a disposal facility out of state.

1979 -1983

The U.S. Air Force and Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) conducted some PCB cleanup at the site.

1981:

A sealant was applied to the floor of the former generator room, which in later years was used as a wood shop, and a better sealant was added to the floor in 1983.

1983:

DEC conducted environmental sampling.

1994:

DEC was notified of additional drums and possible contamination at the site. It takes 2 years for them to be inspected.

1996:

Site is inspected and 60 drums are found in the woods between the school and the airport runway. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers tested the ground beneath the drums and documented petroleum contamination.

1997:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released a report that showed PCBs remained in soil outside the middle school wood shop, which was the former generator room at the White Alice Site.

1998:

A health study tested the school's students, faculty and maintenance staff. The report concluded that residents have not been exposed to harmful levels of PCBs at the site. However ten years later the DEC found large amounts of PCB and TCE in the soil, water and buildings.



**“This is a school where children are suppose to be safe.
This is totally unacceptable.” — Maver Carey**

TIMELINE CONTINUED...

2002-03:

DEC hired a contractor to complete a feasibility study to evaluate seven different alternatives for completing the cleanup.

2006:

Soil samples were provided from around the septic system and near a former drum storage area. The results showed concentrations of PCBs, arsenic, chromium and TCE above cleanup levels in the septic system and soil, thus expanding the area of concern that warrants additional cleanup.

2008:

DEC hired a contractor to complete the PCB cleanup work. Workers found a significantly larger amount of soil contaminated with PCBs behind the Vocational

Technology building than expected. The septic tank contained elevated levels of PCB and TCE. PCBs were found in the wood shop area and were above applicable federal standards.

2009:

Vapor Intrusion was detected from under-ground TCE containers. Air purification filters were installed.

2010:

Oasis Environmental installed and turned on sub-slab depressurization system.

2012:

TCE concentration is found below target levels, except for beneath the metals shop.

Health Effects of PCBs and TCEs

Cancer

- Kidney
- Lung
- Liver
- Cervix

Miscarriages

Attacks the Central Nervous System

Suppresses the Immune System

- Pneumonia
- Non-Hodgkin's
- Lymphoma
- Viral Infections

Neurological Effects

- Learning Deficits
- Short Term Memory
- Learning Difficulties

Endocrine Disruption

- Decreases Thyroid Levels
- Effects normal growth patterns

Elevated Blood Pressure



CONTAMINANTS FOUND IN THE AREA:

Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs), and chlorinated solvent (trichloroethylene or TCE).



“Cleanup requires money.”
— John Halverson, Project Manager, DEC