

NPL Site Narrative for Welsbach & General Gas Mantle (Camden Radiation)

WELSBACH & GENERAL GAS MANTLE (CAMDEN RADIATION) Camden and Gloucester Cities, New Jersey

Conditions at Proposal (October 1995): The Welsbach & General Gas Mantle site is comprised of two former incandescent gas mantle manufacturing facilities and numerous residential properties located in the urban areas of Camden and Gloucester City, New Jersey. The site was initially identified in 1980 during an archive search conducted as part of the investigation of a contaminated radiological site located in northern New Jersey. As a result, an aerial radiological survey of Gloucester, New Jersey and surrounding areas was conducted in May of 1981. The survey encompassed a 20-square-kilometer area surrounding the former General Gas Mantle and Welsbach companies. The survey identified eight separate areas with elevated radiation levels. These included locations of the former Welsbach plant and General Gas Mantle Corporation and three residential areas. The remaining areas exhibiting elevated radiation levels were attributed to sites permitted by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) to use and store radioactive materials.

After several preliminary screening surveys, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), conducted a comprehensive investigation in 1991 of five non-NRC permitted areas in the Camden and Gloucester City vicinity to determine the extent of radiological contamination present. Numerous residential properties were found to have gamma radiation levels exceeding twice the background level for gamma radiation. Of the 93 properties investigated by NJDEP, 32 properties were selected for evaluation because they were inhabited by individuals or workers. The 32 properties are located throughout Camden and Gloucester City. The most probable route of radiation exposure is direct contact with gamma-emitting materials. Although potential contamination of ground water, surface water, and air is suspected, releases to these routes have not been documented. To date, certain contaminated areas have been covered with asphalt or cement. One residence was acquired by NJDEP due to the magnitude of the risk posed by the radioactive materials present at that property.

Status (June 1996): NJDEP has completed most of its planned work, which included covering contaminated areas and relocating residents or workers. NJDEP's activities have provided temporary protection to residents and workers by minimizing the potential for gamma radiation exposure at certain areas of known contamination.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.