

Facts About Durable Covers and Protecting Health at Hunters Point



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Public health and safety is the Navy's first priority in the cleanup at Hunters Point Naval Shipyard (HPNS). The Navy works closely with federal, state and city agencies to ensure the safe transfer of HPNS to the City of San Francisco. The Navy develops a specific work plan for every parcel at HPNS, and each undergoes regulatory review.

The Navy has successfully remediated and transferred bases across the country and leverages its expertise to implement protective solutions for each individual facility, including Hunters Point.

One solution used to protect public health and the environment is called a "durable cover." Environmental and civil engineers determine the correct type of cover – usually pavement or soil – and the cover thickness required to ensure public safety. Soil cover designs also take into account local seismic stability factors to ensure integrity during earthquake events.

The use of durable covers was determined to be protective for certain Hunters Point parcels and approved as part of the regulatory process defined by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). Public meetings were held to present proposed remedial plans, and the selected remedies were then documented in the Records of Decision for each Parcel.

Durable cover solutions are in place at Parcels B, C, D-1, D-2, E, G, UC-1, UC-2 and UC-3 as permanent protective measures to ensure public safety by preventing exposure to naturally occurring asbestos, metals and any remaining contamination in soil. The cleanup actions for radiological contaminants do not rely on the durable cover; instead the cleanup goals for these contaminants assume the durable cover is not present.

To ensure that the covers are not disturbed and remain protective, the Navy monitors and maintains them through regular inspections of soil and pavement conditions, cracks in building foundations, settlement, accumulation of surface water, signs of erosion, the condition of survey benchmarks and signs of vandalism. The durable covers are also assessed as part of the Five-Year Review process under CERCLA to ensure that they will continue to be protective of human health and the environment.

After property is transferred to civilian control, the city can develop the property in accordance with regulatory procedures and controls that take the durable covers into account. Additionally, the requirement to inspect and maintain the durable covers continues after property conveyance and development.

FAQ

Is the Navy's use of covers new at Hunters Point?

Durable covers have been used for many years at HPNS. These covers were approved as part of the standard regulatory process that includes community input before decisions were finalized.

Once homes are built, could residents' gardens and plants bring contamination from underground to the surface?

No. When HPNS parcels are transferred and developed, gardening and other intrusive activities into the durable cover will be prohibited in a binding land use control legal covenant.

What happens if a cover is damaged due to animal or seismic activity?

Covers are inspected regularly by the Navy. Whenever problems are found, they are corrected. After property transfer, the inspection and maintenance requirement will continue with the city, developer or other associations depending on the location.