



July 2, 2012

NOTICE OF DRAINAGE CONSTRUCTION ON
MYRTLE AVENUE AND KIRKLAND STREET

The City of Cambridge Department of Public Works (DPW) will be upgrading water, sewer and drain utilities on Kirkland Street and Myrtle Avenue as part of the sewer separation project presently ongoing in the Myrtle/Magnolia area of the City. This letter is provided to inform you of environmental conditions identified in this area, and of actions that will be taken during construction to ensure public health and safety.

In 2005, environmental investigations identified elevated concentrations of perchloroethylene (PCE), an industrial cleaning solvent, and other products formed by natural degradation of PCE, in soil and groundwater beneath the intersection of these streets. The City DPW and City Public Health Department jointly notified the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP); MassDEP immediately responded by evaluating whether solvent vapors could affect indoor air quality in surrounding properties. This investigation confirmed that there were no impacts to indoor air quality and no health risks to residential property. MassDEP also implemented a monthly pumping program that removed the PCE that was present as a liquid in one monitoring well.

MassDEP conducted additional subsurface investigations and required owners of abutting commercial properties to conduct independent soil and groundwater investigations. The City's environmental consultant, Kleinfelder / S E A, also conducted additional investigations to identify how far these solvents had migrated beneath the streets. The investigations concluded that the contamination is not migrating under buildings or further along the streets. The origin of the PCE is unknown.

During work that requires excavation in this area, the City's contractor, D'Allessandro Corp., will be continuously monitoring air quality in and around the work; if necessary, the contractor's workers will be wearing respirators when working in the trench. Despite occasional odors that may emanate from the work site, short-term exposures to these low concentrations of PCE will not pose a hazard to anyone living or working in the area and the work will conform to very strict state environmental and public health standards. Please also note that these solvents are not flammable and no fire risk is posed. If elevated solvent concentrations or objectionable odors are identified outside the excavations, measures such as foaming or other odor and vapor control measures will be implemented. If necessary, work will be temporarily halted.

At the end of each workday all trenches will be backfilled or covered and plated to control vapors overnight. An LSP from Kleinfelder / S E A, or his or her representative, will also be on-site to ensure the work is being conducted in a manner that is protective of public health and the environment. Work in this area is expected to begin in July and is expected to take several weeks to complete.

Please do not hesitate to contact James Wilcox, Director of Engineering Services if you would like to discuss any aspect of this project in greater detail:
jwilcox@cambridgema.gov (617-349-6426).

Sincerely,

Owen O'Riordan, Assistant Commissioner of Engineering, Cambridge DPW