

USEPA and Navajo Nation Superfund Contaminated Structures Program

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) and the Navajo Nation Environmental Protection Agency's (NNEPA) Contaminated Structures Program (CSP) evaluates structures on Navajo Nation that may have been constructed using abandoned mine materials or built on or near abandoned uranium mines. USEPA and NNEPA have completed over 1,100 assessments on Navajo Nation since the program began in 2007.

Uranium mining took place on Navajo Nation from 1944 to 1986, and some local residents used materials from uranium mines when building their homes. Mining materials that were used can potentially lead to exposure exceeding background (naturally occurring) levels. These materials include ore and waste rock used for foundations, walls, or fireplaces; mine tailings mixed into cement used for foundations, floors, and cinder block walls; and other contaminated building materials (wood, metal, etc.) that may have been salvaged from the abandoned mine areas.

Criteria

The program is for Navajo residents living close to abandoned mines or who know their home was built with materials from a mine.

It is helpful if the resident knows approximately when their home or structure was built and the source of construction materials. Homes that were built with local materials between 1944 and 1990 are most likely to meet the criteria for the program. Mobile homes, modular buildings or new homes generally do not meet the criteria, unless local materials from a mine were used in the foundation of the home or in the yard.

Participation in the program is voluntary and at no cost to the resident. To sign up for a home and yard survey, contact NNEPA Superfund Office at (800) 314-1846 or (928) 871-6859.



Navajo Hogan Circa 1940–1950



Navajo Hogan Circa 1960–1970



Photo 1



Photo 2

Additional Information about the Contaminated Structures Program

- The evaluation of the structure and yard is conducted by 4-6 contractors in addition to USEPA and NNEPA staff with radiation-specific instruments and survey equipment. It will take 2-3 hours to evaluate the inside and outside the home. (See Photos 1, 2, and 3).
- The resident must sign an access agreement providing permission to the CSP team to enter all structures on the homesite as well as the homesite itself. The resident is also asked to provide proof of home ownership.
- The resident can identify areas that are off-limits for the CSP team, and, on the day of evaluation, must keep dogs and other animals out of the team's way.
- A copy of all the data collected during the evaluation and results will be provided to the Homesite resident no later than six months following the completion of the evaluation.



Photo 3

For More Information About Navajo Contaminated Structures Program

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