

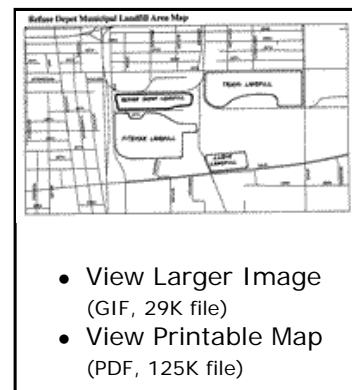
Chicago Heights Refuse Depot Landfill Site

Fact Sheet #1 January 2003

Chicago Heights, Illinois

Background

The Chicago Heights Refuse Depot Landfill (Depot) operated as a municipal landfill from June 1978 until May 1988. The site is 29 acres in size with an approximate height of 50 feet above ground level. The site is bordered to the east and south by two other municipal landfills. (See map below) To the north, there is an iron scrap yard and railroad tracks, with residential homes along East 26th Street. The west is bordered by businesses along East End Avenue, beyond which are railroad lines and light industrial buildings.



A clay cover was installed in 1988 by the site owner. In February 1994, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) issued a Certificate of Closure. Since then the owner has been unable to accomplish post-closure care requirements, financial assurance criteria, or monitoring obligations. Currently, the site has several areas that have become eroded and other locations have very thin cover, not supporting proper vegetation growth. Lack of vegetation is a problem because it allows for increased rain/snow infiltration causing greater landfill gas and leachate production. Leachate forms as water travels through the waste and works its way either to the sides or to the groundwater below. Currently, the Depot landfill has leachate seeps on the north side. Although the owner of the landfill has posted close to \$116,000 for remedial work, additional funding provided by Illinois First will be used to add cover material according to modern landfill regulations, improving the entire landfill in a manner protective of human health and the environment.

What has already been done to investigate the site?

Harding ESE, an environmental contractor working at this site, conducted field investigations during January and February 2002 to evaluate the condition of the cover. Their inspection included recording cover thickness, vegetative stress, exposed surficial waste, erosion, leachate and gas seeps. Harding also reviewed aerial photos, installed gas monitoring probes, and collected leachate, soil, and sediment samples.

What did the investigation find?

Harding ESE reported that the site "requires remedial measures to achieve site stabilization". This includes covering exposed trash areas, repairing eroded areas, regrading to provide uniform drainage, and securing the perimeter of the site with fences, signs, or some physical barrier. The landfill also requires additional venting to reduce the buildup of methane gas produced from the contents decomposing. The report also identified that "a potential exists for aquatic receptors to be adversely affected [if exposed] to contaminants that have migrated into the drainage ditch system associated with the perimeter of the landfill."

Is there activity at the site now?

Yes. Due to a nearby construction site, a large amount of fill and cover material was available at a very minimal cost. The soil has been piled on the west side of the site, just off East End Avenue and will be used in the construction work that is scheduled to begin in the Summer of 2003.

What future steps are planned to address the site?

In order to achieve site stabilization, the IEPA has determined the landfill will require the following remedial activities:

- Repair the existing clay cap
- Modify/enhance the current gas venting system

- Groundwater concerns will need to be addressed separately in another investigation.
- The drainage ditch will continue to be monitored with additional leachate collection options considered if needed.

Will the activities affect the homes or businesses in the area?

Generally, the work at a site has no direct affect on nearby locations but there are some indirect aspects to be considered. During the active construction there will be heavy machinery on site and increased truck traffic in the area. The actual work may also cause an increase in noise or dust in the immediate area, but realizing the area has industrial type businesses and regular train traffic, the additional affects should not be noticeable.

It is also requested that an extra measure of concern be exercised to make sure no children or unauthorized persons visit the area due to the typical hazards presented by an active construction site.

For more information, you may contact:

Other Fact Sheets by the Office of Community Relations are available by request .

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