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EPA begins testing homes in Bridgeton neighborhood for radiation

By Bryce Gray St. Louis Post-Dispatch

Regional officials with the Environmental Protection Agency began screening Tuesday for radiation in the Spanish Village neighborhood of Bridgeton, where a couple filed a recent lawsuit alleging exposure to radioactive dust.

“As a public health agency, we take these allegations seriously,” said the EPA's regional administrator, Mark Hague, in a press release. “We have developed a sampling plan and are working quickly to implement it.”

The statement said that areas "within and around the selected homes" will be screened for alpha, beta, and gamma radiation, to see whether radionuclides exceed naturally occurring levels.

The houses chosen for the tests are "in the immediate vicinity" of the El Ferrol Court home owned by Robbin and Michael Dailey, the plaintiffs in the lawsuit. The couple's home is close to the Bridgeton Landfill and West Lake Landfill, where radioactive waste is stored. Their lawsuit alleges that the signature of radioactivity detected within their house matches that of the landfill's known contents.

"Lab analysis will be made to homeowners approximately 60 days from now," said Ben Washburn, an EPA spokesperson.

"As a scientific agency, our next steps will depend on the data," Washburn said, when asked about whether more homes may eventually be tested. "At this point, it's hard to say what additional steps we'll take. It will depend on what the results of this investigation are."