CITY OF NEW ORLEANS
ROADWORK
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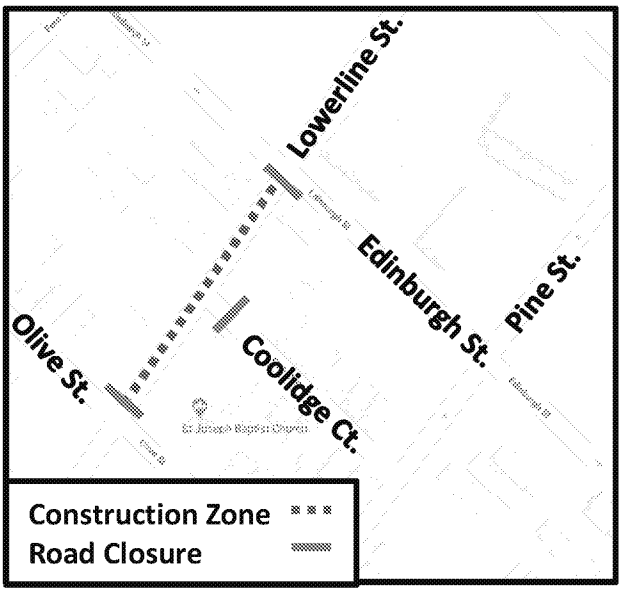
Construction Notice
Lowerline Street (Olive to Edinburgh)
May 18, 2019

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ) and the City of New Orleans will begin removing radiation contaminated soil found in the 3400 block of Lowerline Street near the intersection of Lowerline and Coolidge streets on Tuesday, May 28, 2019. The origin of the material is unknown and while it has been present for some time, it is being removed out of an abundance of caution.

What to Expect: The excavation, removal and disposal operations will require temporary closure of streets Lowerline St. between Olive and Edinburgh Pine and Coolidge Ct. between Lowerline and streets. Crew members will wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) including disposable coveralls and gloves during operations.



All excavated material and soil will be placed in roll off bins for safe removal from the area. Representatives from EPA, LDEQ and the City will be onsite throughout operations to answer questions and be sure that any possible exposure is below the established limits.

Traffic flow will be restricted by barricades and plastic sheeting may be used to protect the ground around the excavation. Metal and silt fencing will also prevent access to the excavation site and any possible runoff.

Residents should plan to park on side streets during the excavation work. Weather permitting, work will begin on Tuesday, May 28 and will take approximately two weeks to complete. Crews will be permitted to work from 7 a.m. to sunset.

Questions may be directed to 504.657.9169 or roadwork@nola.gov.

Thank you for your patience.

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Questions and Answers

What was found on Lowerline and Coolidge Streets in Gert Town?

The US Department of Energy discovered an underground radiation source on the 3400 block of Lowerline St near Coolidge Court between Olive and Edinburgh. During an initial investigation, EPA found radium-226 contamination believed to be 24 to 30 inches below the surface. At the surface of the street in some hot-spots, the radiation level is 1.2-1.5 millirems per hour (mR/hr). This is more than 100 times background levels, or the normal amount of exposure.

How will the site be cleaned?

The removal action will involve the excavation, removal and offsite disposal of the contaminated soil. Equipment used during the disposal activities will also be cleaned and de-contaminated. Approximately 150 cubic yards of soil will be removed from the Site. (Approximately 15 roll off containers full of soil)

How might I be exposed to the Radium-226 from the excavation site?

The risk of exposure to the radium-226 may increase when the site is excavated because workers will dig up the contamination to remove it. The top layers of the street do not contain the contamination. At the hot spots, small areas of roadway will be dug up and all of the contaminated materials taken off for proper disposal. The remediation process will include precautions such as sensors on equipment, perimeter fencing, screens and misting the excavation site with water to control dust during the excavation process. Some dust may initially be visible when the uncontaminated pavement is cut. Residents can minimize exposure by:

- Avoiding the excavation site and all barriers put up around the site. Stay away from the restricted areas.
- Do not touch any of the contaminated soil or equipment
- Keep pets away from the excavation site – if they get into the site, they could track contamination out of the restricted areas
- The crews removing the soils will be wearing protective clothing to shield them from direct contact.

Why is the radium being removed now?

Since we have learned about the radium, we have taken careful actions to consider removing the radium. After talking to many experts, we have learned that there are more benefits to removing radium than leaving it there. If it remains, high background levels of radium will remain in this area.

EPA has arranged for details about this project to be posted on on the EPA's Superfund website at: http://www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/npl. The Superfund website will be updated as the removal efforts continue.

Site related information will also be made available at the Information Repository:
Xavier University of Louisiana
Collection Resources
1 Drexel Drive, New Orleans, Louisiana 70125

Mondays thru Thursdays:	7:30 am until 2:00 am
Friday:	7:30 am until 8:00 pm
Saturday:	10:00 am until 6:00 pm
Sunday:	12:30 pm until 10:00 pm