



County of Orange
SOCIAL SERVICES AGENCY

888 N. MAIN STREET
SANTA ANA, CA 92701-3518
(714) 541-7700

MICHAEL L. RILEY, Ph.D.
DIRECTOR

MIKE RYAN
CHIEF DEPUTY DIRECTOR

CAROL WISEMAN
DIVISION DIRECTOR
ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES

WENDY AQUIN
DIVISION DIRECTOR
ADULT SERVICES &
ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

GARY TAYLOR
DIVISION DIRECTOR
CHILDREN & FAMILY SERVICES

MARITZA RODRIGUEZ FARR
DIVISION DIRECTOR
FAMILY SELF-SUFFICIENCY

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Contact

TerryLynn Fisher
Public Information Officer
714-541-7734

In response to ongoing occupant concerns regarding potential soil contamination, the County of Orange elected to conduct active soil gas sampling in shallow soil below and around the southwest portion of the 840 Eckhoff building on Saturday, February 25, 2012. Preliminary results of the soil gas sampling found the presence of tetrachloroethylene (also known as perchloroethylene or "perc") at levels warranting further investigation. Upon receipt of final soil gas sampling analytical test results, the County of Orange will conduct additional investigation activities to better characterize soil gas conditions at the 840 Eckhoff site.

Based on the most recent indoor air analytical test data collected in August of 2011, the County of Orange does not have an indication that the perchloroethylene in the soil is negatively affecting indoor air quality in the building at this time. However, in an ongoing effort to ensure the health and well-being of building occupants, we will immediately begin additional soil and air gas investigation activities followed by a risk assessment to evaluate the potential risk to building occupants.

Further information about tetrachloroethylene from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency can be found at:

- http://epa.gov/oppt/existingchemicals/pubs/perchloroethylene_fact_sheet.html.

The County of Orange will continue the planned relocation of the Adoptions Program, which is currently housed on the first floor in the southwest corner of the 840 Eckhoff building, to the adjacent 800 building. This move was planned prior to the soils testing and is being done to: 1) minimize occupant disruptions anticipated from upcoming investigative activities; 2) alleviate staff concerns regarding potential affects from the preliminary soil gas condition; and, 3) consolidate the Adoptions Program staff from 840 Eckhoff and other sites into a single location to improve operational efficiency. The move is scheduled to begin this week.

Every effort is being made to determine as quickly as possible what risk, if any, there may be to building occupants. SSA executives are maintaining an open line of communication with employees to listen to their concerns and provide answers as quickly as possible. The County of Orange and the Social Services Agency are taking this matter very seriously and will ensure that staff are apprised of updates, as they are available.