



Questions and Answers: NIH's Building 470 in Frederick, MD

CancerMail from the National Cancer Institute

CancerMail News

National Institutes of Health
December 17, 2001

Michalowski Jennifer
NCI Press Office
(301) 496-6641

1. What is Building 470 and what was it used for?

Building 470 is a seven-story steel and brick building at Fort Detrick in Frederick, Maryland. The building belongs to the National Institutes of Health. The property was transferred from the Department of Defense in 1988.

In 1953, the Army constructed Building 470 as a pilot plant for the production of biological agents as part of the United States' biological warfare program. From 1954 to 1965, the building was used for production of *Bacillus anthracis*, *Francisella tularensis*, and *Brucella suis*. These bacteria are the causative agents of anthrax, tularemia, and brucellosis, respectively.

2. When were infectious agents last used in the building?

Production of biological agents ceased in 1965 and all production and processing equipment was sterilized. Laboratory work continued until 1970, but no infectious agents were produced. In 1970, the

building was vacated and decontamination began. Final decontamination was completed in June of 1971.

3. Is there a biological threat to the community or to individuals who enter Building 470?

Following decontamination in 1971, the Army carried out extensive testing and found no evidence of any of the biological agents once produced there. Samples from approximately 1,500 locations throughout the building tested negative for B. anthracis. In September of 2000, safety experts from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Duke University, and Science Applications International Corporation reviewed the post-decontamination quality assurance test data and concluded that there was no evidence of residual contamination with infectious agents previously used in the building.

4. What is the current condition of Building 470?

Today, Building 470 is in poor structural condition. The exterior mortar and brick of the building are buckling, and the roof is leaking. Corroded beams and columns, cracked and peeling plaster, and blistering paint contribute to the disrepair of the building. This deterioration could lead to significant structural failure and risk to adjacent buildings and the employees occupying them. There is the potential for falling bricks or pieces of mortar, which could endanger passersby or vehicles. Further structural failure could eventually cause tons of masonry, iron and steel to fall onto attached and adjacent buildings and thoroughfares.

5. What is planned for Building 470?

The demolition of Building 470 has been recommended. The NCI plans to consult with experts regarding the destruction of buildings in confined spaces to ensure that the demolition is carried out in the safest possible manner.

###

National Cancer Institute Information Resources

You may want more information for yourself, your family, and your doctor. The following National Cancer Institute (NCI) services are available to help you.

Telephone...

Cancer Information Service (CIS)

Provides accurate, up-to-date information on cancer to patients and their families, health professionals,

and the general public. Information specialists translate the latest scientific information into understandable language and respond in English, Spanish, or on TTY equipment.

Toll-free: 1-800-4-CANCER (1-800-422-6237)

TTY: 1-800-332-8615

Internet...

[Http: //cancer.gov](http://cancer.gov) - Cancer.gov is the NCI's primary web site and provides immediate access to critical cancer information and resources. It contains material for health professionals, patients, and the public, including information from PDQ about cancer treatment, screening, prevention, genetics, supportive care, and clinical trials, and CANCERLIT, a bibliographic database. Cancer.gov also includes information on understanding trials, deciding whether to participate in trials, finding specific trials, plus research news and other resources.

E-mail...

CancerMail

Includes NCI information about cancer treatment, screening, prevention, genetics, and supportive care. To obtain a contents list, send e-mail to cancermail@cips.nci.nih.gov with the word "help" in the body of the message.

Fax...

CancerFax

Includes NCI information about cancer treatment, screening, prevention, genetics, and supportive care. To obtain a contents list, dial 301-402-5874 or 1-800-624-2511 from a touch-tone telephone or fax machine hand set and follow the recorded instructions.

Date Last Modified: 01/2002

CancerWEB

© Copyright 1996-2002

cancernet@cancerweb.org.uk