

NORLITE

DEC Sampling Initiatives, Operational Oversight, and Permitting

DEC Divisions of Materials Management, Air Resources, Mineral Resources, Water, Environmental Justice, and Environmental Permits

WHO TO CONTACT: 

Comments and questions are always welcome and should be directed as follows:

GENERAL:
NEW! norlite.reporting@dec.ny.gov

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The State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) and its State and local partners are committed to protecting the public health and the environment of the City of Cohoes and surrounding area. This community update provides an overview of DEC’s recent actions and the steps we are taking to address public concerns arising from Norlite’s operations.

JOIN US FOR A VIRTUAL PUBLIC INFORMATION SESSION ON MARCH 31

DEC will hold a virtual public information session on March 31 from 6 to 8 p.m. to discuss New York State’s comprehensive soil and water sampling initiative and DEC’s ongoing permitting process of the Norlite facility in Cohoes. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, DEC presentations will be conducted virtually through the WebEx Events online platform or via conference call. Local residents and other interested stakeholders are encouraged to join the virtual session and submit questions before and during the session.

To join the virtual session on March 31, 2021 at 6 p.m.:

- Visit <https://on.ny.gov/3cOa0HV> and click “Join”
- Event Number: 185 276 7811
- Password: NYSDEC2021
- For information on how to participate in a virtual meeting, go to <https://www.dec.ny.gov/public/51805.html>

To join by phone:

- Dial: 1-518-549-0500
- Access Code: 185 276 7811#
- Press # again in lieu of an attendee I.D. number

Submit questions to DEC in advance:

- Email: Comments.Norlite2020@dec.ny.gov or **NEW!** norlite.reporting@dec.ny.gov
- Call: (518) 357-2075
- Mail: Public Participation Office, NYSDEC, 1130 N. Westcott Road, Schenectady, NY 12306

SOIL AND WATER SAMPLING RESULTS

On March 9, DEC announced the findings of the agency's comprehensive soil and water sampling initiative of communities surrounding the Norlite facility. DEC conducted the science-driven sampling initiative to help determine if contaminants are present in communities surrounding the Norlite facility as a result of its past combustion of aqueous film-forming foam (AFFF) that contains Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) as well as sampling for 23 metals, including mercury, contained in other waste streams.

The study found no clearly discernible pattern of aerial deposition that could be traced to Norlite's operations. Sampling identified low-level detections of PFAS compounds in all soil samples collected, upwind, downwind, and at background locations, consistent with emerging research on the prevalence of these contaminants in urban, suburban, and rural environments. In addition, concentrations of PFAS found in soils were below guidance values developed by DEC and the Department of Health (DOH) and do not indicate a human health risk. The full DEC study and corresponding data are available at DEC's website. Visit:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/121118.html>

ENFORCEMENT ACTIONS

On Feb. 10, DEC issued two Notices of Violation to Norlite, LLC, for six air quality violations witnessed during DEC's ongoing active oversight of the facility. As part of DEC's ongoing on-site monitoring of the facility's operations, DEC observed violations of Norlite's air quality requirements and the controls in place to prevent dust from leaving the site. DEC staff immediately took appropriate corrective action on-site to address these conditions. DEC will continue to require the facility to ensure controls are operating as designed in order to prevent all dust from the facility's operations from migrating off-site.

Additional actions will be forthcoming upon the conclusion of other ongoing investigations.



REPORT ODOR AND DUST COMPLAINTS

Residents are encouraged to immediately call both Norlite and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Spill Hotline and report significant odors, dust, or other concerns related to the Norlite facility. Calling in complaints as they happen is key to immediately alerting appropriate DEC staff to respond on-site and take appropriate action and creates a record of the complaint with the facility.

Norlite Phone Line (24-hour): 518-235-0401

NYS Spill Hotline (24-hour): 1-800-457-7362

DEC encourages residents to submit any additional information, including photos, videos or other supplemental data to assist in investigations, to our new email address:

norlite.reporting@dec.ny.gov

PERMITTING STATUS

DEC submitted a Notice of Incomplete Application to the facility on Feb. 26, 2021, for the pending Air Title V and Part 373 RCRA Hazardous Waste permit applications. This Notice included comments from DOH, Environmental Protection Agency, and DEC. The document requested information DEC requires in order to determine whether the applications are complete under the Uniform Procedures Act. If Norlite submits the information requested, DEC's enhanced public review and comment process would begin.

FUGITIVE DUST CONTROL AND MONITORING

In response to concerns raised by the community and the facility's recent air quality violations, DEC is significantly increasing air quality monitoring both at the facility and in the neighboring community to provide a more comprehensive assessment of off-site fugitive dust impacts from the Norlite facility.

Fixed Air Monitoring Stations at Saratoga Sites

DEC installed two fixed air monitoring stations at Saratoga Sites. These new air monitoring stations allow DEC to continuously sample dust events as they are occurring and provide DEC with updated air quality data. DEC selected the locations of the new air monitoring stations in coordination with the City of Cohoes and the Cohoes Housing Authority based on areas identified by community members as locations where there have been past observations and complaints of off-site fugitive dust. The data from this new air monitoring initiative will inform and guide further DEC decision-making in order to ensure the protection of public health and the environment in the local community.

In addition to the fixed air monitoring stations, DEC deployed mobile particulate matter (PM-10) monitoring equipment. The use of this mobile equipment enables DEC field staff to obtain PM-10 concentrations upwind and downwind of a fugitive dust event and thereby allows for more thorough assessment, tracking, and documentation of fugitive dust plumes.

Air Quality Sampling Data

Samples from the fixed air monitoring stations will be collected and analyzed at regular intervals. This data provides DEC with additional information about potential off-site impacts to guide DEC's decision-making regarding this facility and its operations.

Fugitive Dust Plan Updates

To protect public health and the environment and to prevent off-site migration of fugitive dust, DEC is requiring appropriate updates and improvements to the facility's fugitive dust control plan as part of DEC's pending actions.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION

Additional information on DEC's past enforcement actions, the ongoing permit process for Norlite's facility, the soil and water sampling initiative, past community updates, and other State actions can be found on DEC's website. Visit:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/121118.html>

WATCH FOR ADDITIONAL COMMUNITY UPDATES FROM DEC



Have site information such as this Community Update sent right to your email inbox. DEC invites you to sign up with one or more county email listservs available at the following web page: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/61092.html>

It's quick, it's free, and it will help keep you better informed. As a listserv member, you will periodically receive site-related information/announcements for all sites in the counties you select.