



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Office of Communications (614) 644-8562

Scrap Metal Facilities in Canton, Mansfield and Massillon Receive Shipments Containing Low Levels of Radiation

COLUMBUS – Scrap metal processing facilities in Canton, Mansfield and Massillon received shipments from a Pennsylvania scrap metal facility on Tuesday containing low levels of radiation. Ohio Department of Health (ODH) radiation protection staff were on-site at all three facilities throughout the day to conduct radiation testing and to ensure planning for the safe disposal of the contaminated scrap metal.

The contaminated scrap metal is securely contained and does not pose a health risk to facilities' employees or the general public.

“As a precaution, many scrap metal processing facilities have radiation alarms to monitor and detect radiation in incoming shipments for the safety of their employees and the general public,” said Gene Phillips, chief of the ODH Bureau of Environmental Health and Radiation Protection. “Radiation can occur in scrap metal for a variety of reasons, including because the owner who sends it for recycling does not realize that the equipment contains small radioactive sources.”

The exact source of the radiation that contaminated the scrap metal is being investigated.

Radiation levels can be expressed as the radiation dose (unit of “rem”) absorbed by living tissue during a period of time, such as an hour. The action level for radiation in the public domain in the U.S. is 2 millirem per hour. By comparison, a chest x-ray generates 10 millirem, and a mammogram 70 millirem.

Radiation surveys of contaminated scrap metal delivered to PSC Metals, Inc., in Canton showed a highest reading of 70 microrem/hour, equivalent to less than one-tenth of the radiation dose from a chest x-ray. One microrem is equal to 1/1,000th of a millirem.

Radiation surveys of contaminated scrap metal delivered to PSC Metals, Inc., in Massillon showed a highest reading of 25 millirem/hour, equivalent to the radiation dose from two-and-a-half chest x-rays within one hour.

Contaminated scrap metal delivered to Tube City, Inc., in Mansfield was not unloaded and instead redirected to PSC Metals' Canton facility.

Surveys of employee clothing, locker areas and break rooms at both PSC Metals locations did not show any radiation contamination.

PSC Metals has hired a licensed decontamination provider to develop a plan for clean-up and safe disposal of the contaminated scrap metal.

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City of Canton Contact: James Adams, Health Commissioner (330) 438-4623
City of Mansfield Contact: Lori Cope, Safety Service Director (419) 755-9736
City of Massillon Contact: Joel Smith, Safety Services Director (330) 830-1702