



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES

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Governor

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HEATHER HOWARD, J.D.
Commissioner

April 11, 2008

Ms. Patricia Semple
Executive Director
U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
4330 East West Highway
Bethesda, MD 20814

Dear Ms. Semple:

This letter is to inform and request the involvement of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) regarding the recent findings of a synthetic turf lead screening project conducted by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS). The purpose of the testing was to better understand the scope of lead in synthetic turf products and to communicate these findings to the CPSC for the appropriate follow-up. The results of the screening confirmed the presence of elevated concentrations of lead in nylon-based products. This letter provides a brief background of the issue, the findings of our synthetic turf screening and a request for CPSC continuance of further investigation.

The NJDHSS conducted this small-scale screening of lead in turf products based on our concerns of elevated lead concentrations found in the investigation of a recreational field in Newark. This information is being provided to the CPSC to demonstrate that lead is present in some products made by one of the major manufacturers of synthetic turf products and is, therefore, of a larger concern not only within the state of New Jersey but likely nationally. We respectfully request that the CPSC further investigate this issue.

Under a cooperative agreement with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), the NJDHSS evaluated a synthetic turf-covered recreational field located in Newark, New Jersey in the summer/fall of 2007. This investigation was conducted as part of a larger NJDHSS evaluation of a contaminated property located adjacent to the recreational field. Vacuum dust samples collected from the field surface indicated the synthetic turf fibers were deteriorating creating a synthetic turf dust. Elevated concentrations of lead were detected in the synthetic turf dust (3,742 mg/Kg) and in synthetic turf fibers (3,500 mg/Kg). These levels were compared to New Jersey regulatory residential soil cleanup lead concentrations criteria (SCC) of 400 mg/Kg. As a precaution, the NJDHSS recommended to the City of Newark that they close the field to prevent further exposures of the public to lead originating from the synthetic turf fibers and dust. The field was closed on October 31, 2007. The City of Newark plans to replace the field in 2008 with a synthetic turf product that will be tested to demonstrate it does not contain elevated concentrations of contaminants, including lead.

On December 19, 2007, the NJDHSS informed the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) by phone of the findings of the above investigation, citing our concerns that elevated lead concentrations in synthetic turf products may be an issue of broader impact. A DHSS/ATSDR letter health consultation, dated January 16, 2008, detailing this investigation

and the identity of the synthetic turf product located at this recreational field was provided to the CPSC on January 16, 2008 via e-mail. While CPSC had acknowledged our findings on the phone call in December, they indicated there was not an appropriate amount of information provided to pursue this issue. Based on this response, the NJDHSS decided to further investigate lead in synthetic turf products to provide additional information to the CPSC.

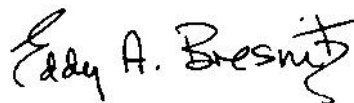
In March 2008, the NJDHSS collected turf fiber samples from 12 synthetic recreational fields located in Bergen, Hudson, Mercer and Morris counties in New Jersey. Additional turf samples were obtained directly from the manufacturers. Synthetic turf products screened for lead included both polyethylene- and nylon-based products.

Our findings indicate elevated lead concentrations of 3,400 mg/Kg and 4,100 mg/Kg are present at two active recreational fields containing nylon-based synthetic turf products. Lead concentrations of 1,000 mg/Kg (3,500 mg/Kg in nylon component of this dual fiber product) and 4,100 mg/Kg were also detected in two nylon-based turf products marketed for residential and commercial application. Comparing the analytical data for the turf brand and fiber types, the data suggest that fibers sampled from nylon-based products contain elevated lead concentrations. These findings were communicated to the CPSC via e-mail dated April 4, 2008 and via conference call held on April 7, 2008. We will be informing the field owners of the lead results and are recommending that they take precautionary measures to reduce the potential risk of exposures to users of the fields.

Synthetic turf fields are being installed in growing numbers around the country and in New Jersey. The NJDHSS receives numerous inquiries regarding health and safety concerns about these fields including the new concerns of lead in turf fibers and turf-sampled dust stemming from the Newark investigation. We anticipate these public concerns to only increase and we do not have specific guidance to offer at this time other than to recommend either limiting access to the field as a precautionary measure, or encouraging hygienic measures to reduce individual dust exposure. As elevated lead concentrations have been confirmed in a sample of nylon-based turf products, including those available through internet purchase for residential applications, a broader investigation of lead and its bioavailability in synthetic turf products, both before and after installation, needs to be performed at a national level.

We urge the CPSC to take immediate action to further investigate lead in synthetic turf products and look forward to follow-up discussion on this issue. We would appreciate a reply on what you intend to do with this information by the end of this month. Please contact Glenn Pulliam of the NJDHSS at 609-588-7497, Glenn.Pulliam@doh.state.nj.us. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Eddy A. Bresnitz, MD, MS
Deputy Commissioner/State Epidemiologist
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