

Fountain Lake Area-General Blasting Information

Blasting is one of the most heavily regulated and monitored industries in this state and country. Agencies such as the Ct. State Police, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, OSHA, Local Fire Marshals and several other agencies all play a role in the regulation and monitoring of blasting operations. In the State of Connecticut, the Commissioner of the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection (formerly the Commissioner of Public Safety) is charged with the exclusive jurisdiction in the preparation of regulations concerning blasting. Local agencies must adhere to these regulations. Local ordinances and restrictions are not enforceable under the current State Regulations. The existing State Regulations have been in force since the 1970's. Numerous attempts have been made throughout the years since to strengthen them, but to no avail. Another attempt is being made in this legislative session to again address and update the regulations. We would urge you to contact your State Representatives to support the strengthening of these regulations.

All companies and individuals performing blasting operations in Connecticut are required to be licensed by the State. The blaster is then required to obtain a permit from the local Fire Marshal to conduct blasting in that jurisdiction. Prior to releasing the permit the site is evaluated by the local Fire marshal to determine if any special requirements will be needed to insure the public safety and protection of property. This could include the use of blasting mats, pre-blast surveys of properties and neighborhood notifications. Unfortunately, current regulations do not specify the minimum separation distances for pre-blast surveys and notifications. A generally accepted distance is from 200 to 250 feet. In our particular situation structures are now a minimum of 800 feet from the location of the blast site.

Most of the complaints received about blasting are due to vibrations caused by the air blast. In many cases the air blast is what you feel and hear and is what causes the rattling of windows, moving of pictures, etc. Air blasts as well as ground vibrations are measured by seismographs. Air blasts are allowed to be a maximum of 133 decibels. Unfortunately a level above 115 decibels becomes readily noticeable and commonly results in window rattling and movement of picture frames, but usually without actual damage. Levels above the 133 decibel level may result in actual damage. At this time no actual reading has been recorded above 128 decibels at the Scinto site.

Ground vibration is obviously the other major concern. As with air blasts there are maximum safe vibration values that have been researched for residential structures containing plaster and drywall construction. These values are measured using a combination of particle velocity and displacement (inches/second at various frequencies). Ground vibrations recorded by the seismographs for this project have been well below the maximum allowable levels as of this date. The blasting contractor is currently using two to three factory calibrated seismographs during each blast and provides the Fire Marshal's Office with the documented results for review, usually on the day following the blast.

As the Farrel relocation project is now taking center stage, the blasting contractor currently working at the Scinto site has indicated that there will be two to three blasts taking place each week for the next five to six months. They have offered to contact residents by phone prior to a scheduled blast. If you are located in the Great Hill Rd. Wakelee, Hull St area and interested in being added to the notification list, please contact the Fire Marshal at 203-734-3525 and he will have the contractor include you on the notification list. As there will probably not be any further pre-blast surveys done, you may wish to

document by camera or video the condition of walls and ceilings within your home including foundations. In addition you may also want to document the conditions of sidewalks and walls on your property including the date the documentation was done.

In the event you feel that your property may have been damaged as a result of the blasting you should contact the Fire Marshal's Office with specifics of the damage. The Fire Marshal will then contact the contractor for further investigation by the contractor's insurance carrier.

The City of Ansonia appreciates your cooperation in this endeavor and will continue to monitor these operations throughout the process.