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County announces new NOA enforcement

By: Matthew Self, The Telegraph

El Dorado County announced stronger dust control measures, a plan of education and enforcement last Wednesday, in response to concerns about naturally occurring asbestos.

The county's program, Be Active Community Outreach Network, will include the hiring of 12 specialists who will inspect sites that generate dust particles. This group will be given regulatory power from the county.

"El Dorado County is far from the only county in California to confront the issue of naturally occurring asbestos, but no county has demonstrated the leadership role El Dorado County has in addressing NOA (naturally occurring asbestos). It is not a new issue to our county," said county supervisor Helen Baumann.

Baumann boasted the county is being "recognized regionally" for its efforts.

The county's program is in response to data presented by the EPA last month, which showed a considerable increase in asbestos exposure in some areas of El Dorado Hills where activity kicks up dust.

While asbestos can be found all over California, particularly in the serpentine rock that accounts for much of asbestos in the state, the amphibole asbestos found in El Dorado Hills is more rare.

It's sharp, short, curly fibers are believed to many times more likely to lead to asbestos-related diseases than chrysotile asbestos.

Asbestos is a known carcinogen and is linked as the cause of respiratory diseases such as mesothelioma, lung cancer and asbestosis.

Other elements of the county's plan include an air quality specialist stationed in El Dorado Hills; education and training for construction companies and pool builders; a 24-hour "800" hotline; a quarterly NOA newsletter to keep residents up-to-date on the latest in asbestos news.

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