



ALLEGHENY COUNTY

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Emergency Services, Health Department Assisting With Fire in Clairton

PITTSBURGH – At approximately 5:45 p.m. on Friday evening, July 14th, Allegheny County Emergency Services (ACES) received a call from the City of Clairton Fire Department requesting the Allegheny County Fire Marshal (ACFM) to a site on Worthington Avenue. The department advised that they were dealing with a fire in a pile that appeared to be deeply set, enough to possibly be a mine fire and were seeking assistance on origin and cause. Their firefighters had responded to the incident at least three times in the prior three days.

The ACFM responded and determined that the fire was contained in a large, illegally-created compost pile that had a deep-seated smoldering fire which was naturally occurring. The smoldering smoke condition was creating a potential health hazard, as the fire department was receiving elevated CO readings near the homes in the area. There was also water run-off that was impacting the Peters Creek, located below the hillside where the fire was burning.

ACES consulted with Clairton officials and recommended the use of an unmanned water nozzle, on fog, to help knock down the smoke and semi-contain the smolder spread. That suggested was followed throughout Friday night. After consultation with the Clairton emergency manager and officials, the mayor signed a declaration of emergency to allow the city to select a clean-up specialist to deal with this issue.

On Sunday evening, the compost pile began smoldering again. Responding agencies are currently dousing the fire with water from about 30' away due to ground stability concerns. This morning, ACES, again having no jurisdiction, but providing suggested guidance, recommended that the Clairton Fire Department continue to wet the pile to eliminate the smoke and smoldering.

The Allegheny County Health Department has also been consulting with the Clairton officials since Friday, along with regular communication with the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Investigators from the Air Quality and Solid Waste programs were on location today. The Air Quality Program is still evaluating for possible air quality violations. The Solid Waste Program issued a notice of violation for improper disposal of waste and the fire. Today's CO readings reflected low values, and it appears as if the watering is decreasing the volume of smoke being created.

At this point, the location is being managed by the local fire department.

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Matthew J. Brown, CEM, CFPS, Chief

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