



CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF AVIATION  
CITY OF CHICAGO

July 26, 2018

Current Resident

«ADDRESS\_1»

«CITYSTATEZIPCODE»

Subject: Status Update regarding Odorous Windows  
Midway Residential Sound Insulation Program (“RSIP”)

Dear Resident:

As a follow-up to our April 2018 letter, we are writing to update you regarding the second round of laboratory testing of RSIP windows. **Today, the Chicago Department of Aviation (“CDA”) is releasing two reports completed by independent experts who have identified the cause of odors and have confirmed that there is no evidence of a health risk caused by odors being emitted from RSIP windows.** Importantly, these reports provide a path forward for resolving the odorous windows issue found in some RSIP windows.

Through extensive testing on this matter, two key findings have been identified: one, the primary source of the window odors are the PVC-coated screens found in many Sound Solutions Windows & Doors, LLC (“Sound Solutions”) window installations; and two, testing has affirmed that there is no evidence of health risks in connection to RSIP window products or the odors emitted. With expert findings determining the cause of the matter, the CDA is working to develop a program to mitigate the odors for the homes impacted. The CDA anticipates that it will roll out this new program to the community this fall.

The full reports compiled by industrial hygiene expert Amec Foster Wheeler (“Amec”) and architectural testing expert Intertek-ATI (“Intertek”) may be viewed at <http://www.flychicago.com/community/MDWnoise/SoundInsulation/pages/default.aspx>.

Overall, laboratory testing indicates that elevated temperature contributed to the rate of off-gassing. In addition to the screens, testing also found a secondary source of odors in the vinyl sash and frame. Based on their findings, experts Amec and Intertek both recommend the removal of screens. Testing was performed by an independent expert, Amec, and the scope of testing spanned all RSIP window manufacturers, including Sound Solutions, Harvey, and Larson, and on a commercially available non-acoustic vinyl window that was not used by the RSIP. Using an analytical method known as “headspace” testing enabled Amec’s experts to examine the effects of compounds which are difficult to detect; the procedure also included subjecting the window components to different elevated temperatures, up to 149 degrees Fahrenheit. This approach also enabled Amec to isolate these components from all other potential sources of compounds, including non-window sources. In sum, the testing by Amec searched for the presence of more than 200,000 chemical compounds.

Ultraviolet radiation (“UV”) testing was also performed in a laboratory setting to determine the effects of sunlight on off-gassing. This testing revealed no difference in the rate of off-gassing with or without UV exposure.

To reiterate, with respect to all vinyl window products installed as part of the RSIP, Amec’s testing has found that there is no evidence of a health risk in connection to the windows or any of their components.

With validation of the cause of the odors in hand, the CDA is now focusing its efforts on developing a mitigation solution for the affected homeowners. In the meantime, the CDA is encouraging residents to take the following steps to alleviate odors in their homes. If you continue to experience the odor from your windows while we finalize the solution to address the situation, there are some steps that you can take this summer.

- You can remove the screens from your windows and store them in a remote location such as a garage. Removing the screens can mitigate the smell in your home.
- Another step residents can take to reduce the odors is to open the outside storm window. This will allow for air circulation between the outer storm window and the inner prime window, reducing the maximum temperature of the screen and vinyl material, and thereby allowing for ventilation of possible off-gas constituents. For a double-hung window, residents can position the storm window in a half-way position to allow for air at the top and bottom. For a slider window, residents can simply open one of the storm panels.

These measures should help prevent heat and odors from building up between the prime window and the storm window and allow any odors to escape outdoors as opposed to inside the home.

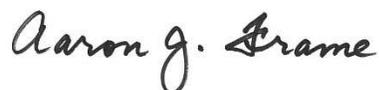
While the testing has established the source of the odor and confirmed that there is no evidence of a health risk, we are taking the next steps. As we announced in April 2018, the City of Chicago will be implementing a 300 home per year mitigation program for odorous windows. We will be sharing the details of this program with the community in the fall.

Finally, in addition to laboratory testing, the City has been conducting a second round of indoor air quality (“IAQ”) testing in several homes during the summer. The results of this second round of IAQ testing will be analyzed and included in a report that will be published in the fall.

We hope that you find these latest results informative. We look forward to bringing our next update to you this fall.

For any questions that you have regarding sound insulation or the odor investigations, please do not hesitate to call our RSIP office at (773) 838-5632.

Sincerely,



Aaron J. Frame  
Deputy Commissioner of Environment