

2018.10.09

12 Deputy M. Tadier of the Minister for Infrastructure regarding health hazards at Fort Regent: [OQ.146/2018]

Further to the recent closure of certain parts of Fort Regent due to fears of asbestos contamination, will the Minister confirm whether the facility is safe for the public and staff; and will he advise whether any other health hazards, including the presence of legionella, have been tested for recently; and, if so, what were the results?

Deputy K.C. Lewis (The Minister for Infrastructure):

The safety of staff and users of Fort Regent is of paramount importance. As a result of increased incidents of debris being found Fort Regent underwent an extensive re-inspection for asbestos containing materials or A.C.M.s. The resulting report has identified A.C.M.s classified as containing low concentrations of asbestos which are heavily bonded. This substance is an unlicensed material and, as such, is not subject to the Health and Safety at Work (Asbestos-Licensing) (Jersey) Regulations 2008. Where debris has been found the areas were closed until a reassurance air monitoring was undertaken. All such monitoring has returned within normal limits and the area is safe for public and staff to use. While asbestos was removed from one area of the Fort, a number of showers were isolated. Prior to the reopening of the area the water was routinely tested for legionella. The results show the presence of legionella species; therefore, the area and outlets remain closed while chlorination of the system involved is undertaken, followed by reassurance testing of the water.

[10:45]

The microbiology results have identified the legionella species as one of the lesser of the risk categories, meaning there is low risk to health. The Health and Safety Inspectorate have been involved at all stages. They have been provided with the microbiology results and are fully aware of the remedial action undertaken.

3.12.1 Deputy M. Tadier:

Was the Minister planning on telling us and the public about the legionella which was found at Fort Regent or was it necessary for a States Member to ask the question before he would publicise that?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

There are so many people involved it is more or less in the public domain. The Deputy, as Assistant Minister, was well aware of it, as are many other people. So it is not a secret, it is a standard procedure when legionella is found, the system is chlorinated and flushed. It is a lesser species and it was returned well within limits.

3.12.2 Deputy R. Labey:

Could the Minister expand on his mention of the unlicensed material and that the law of 2008 does not apply to it? What does that mean?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

It does not come within the law but we regulate it anyway in a sense that A.C.M.s could be paint with fibres in, it could be ceiling tiles with very few fibres but there is asbestos there in minute quantities but it is still there and, of course, we will not take any chances with asbestos containing materials.

3.12.3 Senator S.W. Pallett:

Could I ask the Minister at what stage he intended to tell the Assistant Minister responsible for the users, public and staff, at Fort Regent that these tests were carried out, because to my knowledge the Assistant Minister has not been formally told.

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

Indeed, I was not aware that the Assistant Minister was unaware and apologies for that. I will make sure that he is informed if there are any incidents in the future.

3.12.4 Deputy M. Tadier:

I think one lesson we have learnt today is that as a means of communication telepathy is not an effective method when it comes to Ministers communicating between each other. Will the Minister inform us whether he has a management plan to cover all areas of Fort Regent and its infrastructure and will the Minister share this management plan with Members, or at very least with those Ministers who effectively are responsible for the management of Fort Regent?

Deputy K.C. Lewis:

There is a management plan, there are also records kept of all buildings that contain A.C.M.s or asbestos containing materials. Everything is marked, everything is logged in the event of any workmen coming in to do any work. Everything is recorded to make sure nothing is disturbed that should not be disturbed. As I say, I was not aware that the Assistant Ministers were not aware of this.