

**From:** [ABC XYZ](#)  
**To:** [BOS Legislation, \(BOS\)](#)  
**Subject:** 939 Lombard CEQA appeal additional info to distribute to all  
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**Attachments:** [pastedGraphic.png](#)  
[BOS 831 construction dust risk dangers 91223 CEQA appeal copy.pdf](#)

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CEQA appeal on 939 Lombard permit; held on September 12, 2023 3 pm

**Dear Respected Board of Supervisors, Officials, and City Employees,**

As we approach the crucial date of September 12, 2023, at 3 pm, for the Board of Supervisors full board meeting, we wish to draw your attention to critical health concerns linked to construction sites and their potential impact on school children.

Our intent is to emphasize the importance of considering these risks in the context of the 939 Lombard Permit CEQA appeal.

Here are some research reports that provide **evidence** of the health risks of construction sites to school children:

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These are just a few examples of the research that has been done on the health risks of construction sites to school children. The evidence is clear that exposure to construction can have negative health effects on children, even in the short term. It is important for parents and schools to be aware of these risks and take steps to protect children from exposure to construction.

A building casting shadows can affect the school little children next door in several ways. The shadows can block sunlight from entering the school building and classrooms, making it difficult for children to see and learn. The

shadows can also make the school environment colder and darker.

Exposure to construction sites can cause respiratory problems such as asthma and bronchitis. Inhaling dust and other particles from construction sites can irritate the lungs and cause inflammation. This can lead to coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest tightness, and other symptoms.

**Construction sites can pose a number of health risks to school children, including:**

- Exposure to dust and fumes. Construction dust can contain harmful particles that can irritate the eyes, nose, and throat, and can also trigger asthma attacks. Fumes from paint, solvents, and other chemicals used on construction sites can also be harmful to breathe in.
- Noise pollution. Loud noise from construction can interfere with sleep, concentration, and learning. It can also lead to hearing loss.
- Vibration. Vibration from construction can cause headaches, nausea, and dizziness. It can also damage the inner ear.
- Falls and injuries. Construction sites can be dangerous places, and children are especially vulnerable to falls and other injuries.
- Exposure to lead. Lead is a toxic metal that can cause a variety of health problems, including learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and even death. Construction sites can be contaminated with lead from old paint, pipes, and other materials.

The effects of nearby construction on children's health can vary depending on a number of factors, including the type of construction, the distance from the school, and the length of time the construction is taking place. However, even short-term exposure to construction can have negative health effects on children.

If there is a construction site near your child's school, it is important to take steps to protect their health but most people will neglect to be on guard 24/7. These steps may include:

- Keeping windows closed and doors shut to reduce exposure to dust, fumes, and noise.
- Avoiding the construction site as much as possible.
- Ensuring that your child wears a mask when they are near the construction site.
- Talking to your child's doctor about the potential health risks of construction and how to protect themselves.

**Construction dust & noise**

Expect dust during remodeling. Be sure to clean well during and after projects to help prevent construction dust from **irritating allergies and asthma**. Mopping with a wet mop is best. Don't forget to clean vents, vent covers, duct work and radiators. Also, pay attention to construction at neighbors' homes or elsewhere that could impact your child's safety.

**Construction projects can be noisy.** **Excessive noise** can damage hearing. Pay attention to noise created by renovation activities and keep children away from excessive noise exposure whenever possible.

Noise can have harmful effects on children's learning, behavior and sleep.

Compared to adults, children usually are more vulnerable to noise effects because they are growing and developing. They may also have less control over where they spend time. Children living in less wealthy

environments are more likely to be exposed to higher environmental noise levels.

Some of the ways noises of all kinds can affect children include:

### **Learning**

Too-noisy classrooms and child care settings can affect how children learn. Reading, remembering, and doing well on tests can be difficult when there is too much background noise or noisy conversations. Planes flying overhead can make it hard to understand what the teacher is saying. Teachers may need to interrupt lessons to wait for planes to pass. Feeling annoyed by noise can cause kids to lose focus on lessons.

For infants and children learning how to talk, a noisy environment can make it harder for them to understand speech.

### **Play**

Construction noise can influence how children **play**, which is important for their development. When there are noise, especially loud construction noise, especially younger school children don't focus as much or as long on learning in the classroom.

### **Stress**

Too much noise can cause a person's body to have a stress response. We can see this in children in neonatal intensive care units (NICUs), for example. When these children are exposed to all kinds of construction noises; there can be changes in their breathing, heart rates and oxygen levels.

Noise can increase children's blood pressure, and in adults, long-term noise exposure even raises the risk of having a heart attack.

How does noise affect children with Autism Spectrum Disorder?

Some children with special sensitivities—such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Attention-Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), sensory processing disorders or learning differences—may be disturbed by sounds or noises that usually don't bother children without these conditions.

## About Dr. Balk



**Sophie J. Balk, MD, FAAP**, a general pediatrician at the Children's Hospital at Montefiore in Bronx NY, is a member of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) Executive Committee of the Council on Environmental Health and Climate Change. Dr. Balk is Associate Editor of Pediatric Environmental Health, 4th Edition, the AAP handbook for pediatricians.

<https://oransi.com/blogs/blog/dangers-exposure-construction-site-dust>

### **The Dangers of Exposure to Construction Site Dust**

Construction dust can be a significant problem for many people. Airborne dust can cause a wide range of health and lung problems for construction workers, but it also creates a concern for people living near construction sites.

Whether you work in construction or simply want to understand the risks and solutions for air quality, having a foundation of knowledge can help your health and safety.

### **Types of Dust that Come from Construction Sites**

Modern construction involves many different materials. At any construction site, you may find metal, wood, concrete, sand, sheetrock, and plastics. Because of the various materials being used, the unhealthy dust emissions from a construction site can be full of numerous particles.

When learning about scientific topics, you often come across terms that are only used by a small group of people. When it comes to construction site dust, one of those terms is “respirable silica.” This is essentially a dust from any type of quartz, which is a common mineral that can be released into the air when working with a wide range of materials.

Typical dust from a construction site includes silica dust, which is created when working with materials that contain silica, including concrete and sandstone. Wood dust is another common type created by construction sites. When working with either hard or soft wood, dust particles can be released into the air. Wood dust also comes from manufactured products such as fiberboard and plywood. Dust will also come from lower-toxicity materials, such as gypsum, limestone, dolomite, and marble.

### **Do Certain Construction Tasks Create More Dust?**

Not all construction tasks are the same, and some will release more dust and particulate matter than others. For

example, cutting, in almost any way, will create a lot of dust. Whether you are sawing lumber for carpentry or cutting gaps in a new sidewalk, the simple act of cutting generally creates a lot of dust. Working with concrete and mortar is often a source of dust and cutting roofing tiles can also release a lot of particles.

Grinding concrete or other construction materials will throw dust into the air, and sanding or smoothing wood can be a source of dust as well.

### **What are the Dangers of Construction Site Dust?**

Dust at a construction site can take many different forms, and the materials released into the air can be made of rock, wood, chemicals, and even metal, creating a potentially lethal dust that can spread for a very long distance.

For example, a study from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia looked at the effects of long-term exposure to cement dust. The researchers looked specifically at the effects of cement dust on lung function among mill workers, who were divided into three groups: those that worked in the mill for less than five years, five to ten years, and over ten years.

By looking at the lung function of mill workers, and dividing the information by how long they have worked at the facility, researchers found that exposure to cement dust was linked to respiratory health issues, causing both one-time and ongoing respiratory diseases while impairing overall lung function. This study is important because it made the link between the longevity of exposure and showed that, essentially, the longer you breathe in dust, the more likely you are to have problems with your lungs.

But it's not just cement dust that can cause a problem; virtually anything that is sanded, milled, sawed, or crushed can release dust. For example, an evaluation from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) found that construction workers who sand drywall joint compound (the plaster used to cover drywall joints, often called "drywall mud") were exposed to respirable silica and other dust particles. The study from NIOSH found that workers were exposed to 10-times the permissible amount of dust set by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

### **Demolition and Dust: The Potential for Toxic Dust**

Workers don't necessarily have to be building something for there to be a risk of dust exposure. In fact, managing dust at demolition sites, where something is being destroyed, can be extremely dangerous because of chemicals that have, since the home was constructed, been discovered to be harmful.

According to the EPA, demolishing a home with lead-based paint can create a health hazard in the area by creating lead dust. Dust, they say, is the #1 way that lead gets into the body, and the process of demolishing an old house can create a significant amount of lead dust. This dust can fall near an area or settle on a surface, and demolition workers can also track dust into their homes and communities, exposing others to the toxic particles.

It's essential that workers minimize lead dust exposure as much as possible. Lead-safe practices include containing dust inside the work area and using work methods that minimize the amount of dust created. Conducting a careful cleanup of the debris created by the demolition is also important.

### **The Dangers of Respirable Crystalline Silica**

A danger facing construction workers (and nearby homes) comes from respirable crystalline silica, which is a common mineral found in many building materials, including stone and sand. If someone works with these materials, they can be exposed to a small amount of silica particles, which are extremely small and can easily be inhaled. (Meaning they are "respirable.")

These materials can travel deep into your lungs and cause silicosis, which is incurable and, on rare occasions, deadly. Respirable crystalline silica is also linked to lung cancer and other respiratory diseases. In most cases, however, the disease will occur after years of exposure to the materials.

Respirable crystalline silica is common among the manufacturing of glass, pottery, brick, and concrete, as well as asphalt roofing and porcelain, among many other products. Use of industrial sand can also release silica.

Dust released into the environment is a significant concern for both the workers and people who live near the construction site. This is especially true for anyone that could be vulnerable to dust, such as people with asthma or COPD.

Construction dust can contain harmful particles, it is impossible to stop any dusts from being released into the air.

**Potential Risks of the 939 Lombard Project:**

The construction project's proximity to the school raises concerns about health risks due to dust, fumes, noise, and other construction-related pollutants. Shadows cast by the building may impact the school environment, blocking sunlight and affecting temperature. We encourage the Board of Supervisors to weigh these health risks seriously when evaluating the project's environmental impact.

**Legal Responsibility and Liability:**

We wish to remind all stakeholders that public officials and city employees involved in approving housing permits can be held personally liable for CEQA violations if they lead to public or citizen harm. Therefore, it is crucial to consider these health risks in the decision-making process.

As a friendly reminder; in general, if a city employee or commissioner approves a new housing permit that later causes damage to school children from construction dust, fumes, lack of shadows, etc., they may be held liable for the damages.

If a CEQA exemption causes injury to the public or citizens, it is possible for public officials to be held liable for CEQA violations.

Public officials who approve projects without complying with CEQA can be held personally liable for any resulting environmental damage.

We humbly request that you carefully consider the evidence presented and prioritize the well-being of our children and community as you assess the 939 Lombard Permit CEQA appeal.

Sincerely,

/s/Martin Lee Eng  
415-246-1111  
[MyAsians@Gmail.com](mailto:MyAsians@Gmail.com)  
8/31/2023

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