

CITY COUNCIL HEARING FEBRUARY 2005

There are many disturbing aspects to the demolitions that are either imminent or already underway in Lower Manhattan.

In no particular order:

1. Beware in any monitoring the use of 'averaging.' This practise is used to wash away all disturbing results. A spike in contamination on one side of a building cannot be diluted by averaging it with a normal result on the other side. That wouldn't help the people who are consistently exposed on the contaminated side.
2. OSHA action limits for lead seem to have been exceeded at 130 Liberty Street yet no action has been taken. The levels are simply recorded on the website.
3. It was worrisome to hear Kevin Rampe this morning say that LMDC is applying for variances. Aren't variances usually invoked in order to wiggle out of adhering to regulations?
4. The omnipresent issue of EPA's "taking the lead" vis a vis the demolitions: EPA has taken to using the phrase but that's far from doing the deed. 'Taking the lead' means taking responsibility; being the ultimate responsibility. What EPA means by it is that they're busy on the phone fobbing off responsibility onto other agencies. When it comes time for someone to be sued, EPA is making sure it won't be them. Instead we'll have a room full of agencies all pointing fingers at each other and tied up in litigation for ever. So EPA's pseudosolicitous attitude of "After you, Alphonse" in which they defer to every other agency and its uncle on matters that fall squarely within their jurisdiction, is exactly NOT taking the lead.

Jenna Orkin
World Trade Center Environmental Organization