

3.7 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

3.7.1 SETTING

With extensive agricultural operations characterizing large portions of the Monterey Bay region, agricultural chemicals comprise the bulk of all potentially hazardous materials in the area by volume, although other types of potentially hazardous materials can also be found in urbanized areas where employed in industrial, commercial and residential uses. A number of industrial operations conducted in the Monterey Bay region may involve the routine use of hazardous materials as part of the production process, which presents the possible risk of hazardous emissions in the event of an accident. Potentially hazardous materials are also transported on the regional transportation system, which also poses a potential hazard associated with the possible release of toxic substances as a result of an accident.

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) provides a database of sites where hazardous materials have been released (Calsites), and oversees cleanup pursuant to the California Health and safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.8. Listed sites include a variety of land uses including agricultural, petroleum processing, chemical production, auto wrecking, landfills, active and former military facilities, etc.

Aerial-deposited lead is often encountered on roadway shoulders along older and heavily-traveled highways. Construction project waste with lead levels greater than 1,000 mg/kg for total lead or 5 mg/l for soluble lead are considered hazardous, and waste which meets these criteria normally must be disposed of at a Class 1 hazardous waste landfill.

Naturally occurring asbestos is a fibrous material found in serpentine and other ultramafic rock. Caltrans is now required to address potential hazards related to exposure to naturally occurring asbestos on all of that agency's projects.

The region has six publicly-owned civil aviation airports and several civil aviation helipads, each of which could represent a potential hazard to those living and/or working in the surrounding area in the event of a major aircraft accident.

Individual jurisdictions within the Monterey Bay area have developed emergency response plans and evacuation plans, which will be implemented in the event of an emergency or natural disaster.

Much of the land within the Monterey Bay region remains undeveloped. Those undeveloped areas which are unsuitable for cultivation are often used for grazing, although vast areas are not suitable even for this low-intensity agricultural use. The vegetation in these areas may present a risk of wildland fires, which may be particularly critical in areas where these areas adjoin urban or suburban development.

3.7.2 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the three plans could have a significant environmental impact if it were to result in:

- The creation of a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transportation, use or disposal of hazardous materials;
- The creation of a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment;
- Hazardous emissions within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school;
- The handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school;
- Development located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 (if such development would create a significant hazard to the public or the environment);
- Development located in an area covered by an airport land use plan (or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport), if it would result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area;
- Development within the vicinity of a private airstrip, if it would result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area;
- Impairment or physical interference with the implementation of an adopted emergency response plan;
- Impairment or physical interference with the implementation of an adopted emergency evacuation plan; or
- Exposure of people or structures to significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires (including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands).

Exposure to Hazardous Materials

IMPACT 3.7.1: Potential to Create a Significant Hazard to the Public or Environment. The development of some transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans may have the potential to be affected by Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Calsites, aerial deposited lead, naturally occurring

asbestos and other hazardous materials. In the absence of appropriate precautions and/or cleanup efforts, such projects may create the potential for exposing construction workers, the public or the environment to hazardous materials, a **potentially significant environmental impact**.

RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURE

MITIGATION MEASURE 3.7.1: Site-Specific Analysis for Hazardous Materials/Remediation/Cleanup

Implementing agencies shall, where appropriate, investigate the potential for transportation system improvement projects to be located at, or in the vicinity of, identified Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) hazardous material sites, or to be located in areas that contain aerial deposited lead, naturally occurring asbestos or other hazardous materials. Site-specific evaluation should include a historical assessment of past uses, and soil sampling should be conducted when determined appropriate by the implementing agency. In those instances where a specific project site is found to be contaminated by hazardous materials, the site shall, where appropriate, be cleaned up to the standards of the appropriate regulatory agency, and appropriate remediation measures to ensure worker safety during construction shall, where appropriate, be identified prior to the commencement of earthmoving activities, subject to the review and approval of DTSC.

RESULTING LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of this mitigation measure could reduce potential impacts to a level of less than significant.

Transport of Hazardous Materials

Construction of transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Element of the three plans would most likely involve the use of solvents, biocides and fuels that can be considered hazardous if not used, stored or disposed of properly. However, all transport and use of hazardous materials at construction sites would be subject to myriad federal, state and local regulations, and as long as these requirements are met, potential impacts would be considered less than significant.

With the expansion of the regional transportation network envisioned under the three plans to accommodate additional vehicular traffic, the chances of an accidental release of hazardous materials into the environment will be increased. All transport of hazardous materials is subject to federal, state and local regulations intended to minimize public safety risks. As required under law, the transportation of hazardous materials and wastes is monitored to ensure the notification of local jurisdictions in the event of a release.

The number of hazardous materials shipments carried along the regional transportation system is a largely a function of the production of (or the demand for) hazardous materials within the region,

and is not directly related to the size or condition of the regional transportation system. While any increase in the number of hazardous materials shipments could bring an increased risk of upset or accidents involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment, the implementation of the transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans would be expected to reduce traffic congestion and enhance safety generally, thereby reducing the risk of an accident involving a hazardous materials shipment.

IMPACT 3.7.2: Potential Hazards Associated with Roadway Design and the Transport of Hazardous Materials. Although the transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans would generally be expected to improve roadway safety for the transport of hazardous materials, proper design of roadway improvements is necessary to minimize potential safety impacts associated with the transport of hazardous materials. The possible effects of unsafe roadway design on hazardous material transport could be considered a **potentially significant environmental impact**.

RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURE

MITIGATION MEASURE 3.7.2: Design Roadway Improvements along Designated Hazardous Materials Transfer Routes for Enhanced Safety

For roadway improvements along designated hazardous materials transfer routes, implementing agencies shall, where appropriate, ensure that such projects are designed to allow for safe traveling, merging and passing of hazardous materials haul trucks. Design considerations should include: wider “slow” lanes, longer approach ramps and merger lanes, and more gradually-inclined interchanges.

RESULTING LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE

Implementation of the above mitigation measure could reduce this impact to a level of less than significant.

Operational Use of Hazardous Materials

Alternative fuel projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans could create a risk of explosion if the facilities are not designed and operated properly. However, the construction and operation of such facilities would be subject to federal, state and local regulations, and as long as these requirements are met, potential impacts would be considered less than significant.

Hazardous Emissions Near Schools

None of the transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans would be expected to result in any hazardous emissions within

one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school, or in the handling of hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school.

Aviation Hazards

Some of the projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans involve airport improvements, but none of these projects involve development which would result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the general vicinity.

Emergency Response/Evacuation Plans

Implementation of the three plans would not impair or physically interfere with the implementation of any adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan. It is possible that during construction of some transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans, traffic detours and congestion in some areas may temporarily hinder emergency vehicle response or evacuation in the event of an emergency. This impact is not considered significant, however, due to the limited scale of the proposed projects, the availability of alternate transportation routes, and the temporary nature of the traffic impacts during construction.

Wildland Fires

None of the transportation system improvement projects identified in the financially constrained Action Elements of the three plans would be expected to result in the exposure of people or structures to significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.