

SSAB initiates reopening of construction site in Luleå after completion of analysis of causes behind disease symptoms

This week, SSAB is initiating a controlled restart of the steelworks construction in Luleå after completion of the analysis of the causes behind disease symptoms. Extensive measurements have been carried out where no measurement results have shown concentrations above the applicable limit values, neither in air, gases nor in soil except what was previously known. After consultation with experts in the respective fields, the overall analysis is that symptoms have arisen because of a combination of factors, with exposure to fine dust particles from construction activities being the primary factor. The negative impact of fine dust particles is amplified as a result of low humidity and the presence of seasonal respiratory viruses.

"After extensive measurements and analyses, we have now clarified the connection between the work that has taken place at the site and the reported symptoms. The overall analysis that we have done together with external experts shows that the cause is a combination of factors that have arisen despite the fact that no individual measurements have shown concentrations above the applicable limit values. Safety is always our first priority, which is why we will now open the construction site step by step in a controlled and safe manner," says Carl Orrling, Technical Director and Head of the Transformation Office at SSAB.

Since the work was paused on 3 April, the measurements have intensified and to date more than 200,000 gas measurements have been carried out. In addition, measurements have been carried out of indoor air in office spaces, extensive particle measurements, and measurements under production-like conditions. The measured values have not exceeded the applicable limit values. The in-depth analysis indicates that the symptoms were primarily caused by exposure to fine dust particles, with the effects being exacerbated by low humidity and the presence of seasonal respiratory viruses.

The connection occurs when several factors interact, where weather conditions such as cold and wind also contribute to spreading dust and increasing sensitivity in the respiratory tract. Dust concentrations have been within normal levels for this type of workplace and not at elevated or toxic levels.

The analysis shows that the cases of illness are due to a combination of causes and that the work environment is considered safe to open with knowledge of how these causes should be handled. The previously paused works

will therefore be resumed in stages, starting on Wednesday 27 May, in continued close dialogue with subcontractors, union representatives and relevant authorities.

The restart will begin in areas that have not been affected by the reported symptoms. The work is carried out in collaboration with contracted contractors and is based on completed risk assessments and impact analyses in accordance with applicable occupational health and safety requirements. SSAB plans to reopen the remaining areas gradually and in a controlled manner, in line with the risk assessments for work in each respective area. Continuous monitoring of dust levels will continue on an ongoing basis, and measures will be taken to reduce the spread of dust at the construction site.

Overall, the paused work is not considered to have had any significant impact on the project's overall schedule or budget.

For further information, please contact:

Helena Norrman, EVP & Head of Group Communications, helena.norrman@ssab.com,
phone: +46 730 66 53 46

Martin Gidlund, Transformation Communication Manager, martin.gidlund@ssab.com,
phone: +46 704 50 59 03

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