



AJU's Brandeis-Bardin Campus and the Santa Susana Field Laboratory

This fact sheet addresses the continued safety of American Jewish University's Brandeis-Bardin Campus in light of contamination that occurred on a property in Simi Valley adjacent to our southern-most border, the former Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL). Current operations at the SSFL are entirely focused on environmental clean-up of that site, which is being overseen by the California state government. Quarterly updates about the progress of the SSFL's clean-up are distributed to AJU and the entire surrounding community (Simi Valley and West Hills).

Where is the Santa Susana Field Laboratory? The Santa Susana Field Laboratory is located to the south of the Brandeis-Bardin property in Simi Valley, California. The SSFL is separated from the campus by a "buffer zone" as an additional precautionary measure. The Brandeis-Bardin Campus area bordering the buffer zone is unoccupied and made up of steep terrain and dense brush. Camp and retreat activities at the Brandeis-Bardin Campus are centered in the northern section of the 2,800-acre Brandeis-Bardin property, 1.5 miles away from the SSFL property.

The Brandeis-Bardin Campus's safety has been confirmed by various federal and state environmental agencies.

- In 2015, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) stated: *"Based on available data, there is no evidence of contamination from SSFL that poses an offsite threat to human health or the environment."*
- In a 2017 Community Update, the DTSC affirmed: *"The Brandeis-Bardin Institute Campus is safe for use by Faculty, Staff, Students, and Campers. Contamination at the Santa Susana Field Laboratory (SSFL) does not pose a health threat to users (e.g., campers, visitors, students, faculty, administrators or staff) of Brandeis-Bardin Institute, or other off-site areas."*

All available evidence shows that the Brandeis-Bardin Campus is safe.

- Environmental conditions on the Brandeis-Bardin Campus have been studied extensively since 1991 by federal and state environmental agencies, as well as independent third-party environmental engineers. During that time, hundreds of soil, sediment, surface water, groundwater, and vegetation samples have been analyzed.
- American Jewish University (AJU) acquired the Brandeis-Bardin campus in 2007 following an extensive review of environmental records and testing results. This review showed that all measurements of potential contaminants were either non-detectable or well within federal and state safety thresholds.

- The Woolsey Fire of 2018 started in a section of the SSFL acreage away from our property line and burned in the opposite direction from the Brandeis-Bardin Campus. In the following weeks, numerous federal, state, and local environmental agencies performed a battery of tests, took measurements and physical samples, and reviewed data from monitoring stations on the SSFL site and in nearby communities, including air samples. They concluded that “all the measurements and analyses indicate **no radiation or hazardous materials were released from the fire** at the SSFL site,” and that “the observations and data from these investigations provide multiple lines of evidence that **no radiation or hazardous materials from SSFL were detected in communities** following the Woolsey fire.”

To ensure the Brandeis-Bardin Campus’s continued safety for all visitors and residents, we are committed to ongoing, robust testing, as well as monitoring developments regarding the cleanup efforts at the SSFL.

- AJU retains independent environmental experts to conduct regular soil, water, and vegetation testing, and to review, evaluate, and validate third-party testing on a regular basis:
 - **Soil** is regularly monitored and tested for a variety of potential pollutants. This testing has consistently shown that soil on the property is safe.
 - **Fruits and vegetables** grown on the Brandeis-Bardin property represent less than 1 percent of the overall food supply on the site. These foods are routinely tested for safety, and the results demonstrate that they are as safe as fruits and vegetables sold in local supermarkets.
 - **Ground water is not used** for drinking at the Brandeis-Bardin campus. Although tests show that ground water on our campus meets California drinking water standards, ground water is not used for irrigation purposes and only rarely used to provide water to livestock. Since 1964, all of Brandeis-Bardin’s drinking water has come from the **Calleguas Municipal Water District**, which also provides water to roughly three-quarters of Ventura County residents.
 - Since 2010, **storm water** runoff from SSFL is primarily diverted away from Brandeis-Bardin campus property. Our testing protocol specifically includes post-rainy-season testing when possible to confirm continued safety of the property.
- An extensive 2016 independent study conducted by Tetra Tech concluded that there is “no unacceptable human health risk” for people at the Brandeis-Bardin campus, estimating the health risk to be 1 out of 23 million - more than 23 times lower (better) than the EPA standard. By comparison, the odds of being struck by lightning in any one year are 1 out of 700,000.
- In 2021, the independent environmental consultant GSI Environmental confirmed, based on its review of the historical data, reports and annual monitoring, that “[t]he evidence shows that the monitoring and mitigation measures implemented at the SSFL are effectively containing contaminants and preventing off-site migration.” Annual monitoring performed in subsequent years, up through the most recent testing event in 2023, continue to support that conclusion.

We are committed to transparency. The safety and wellbeing of our campers, staff and visitors is and will remain our single highest priority.

- AJU publishes all testing data and reports on the safety of the property on our website for the community to access at aju.edu/bbcsafety. To learn more, please visit aju.edu/bbcsafety.
- We invite and encourage any member of the community to reach out to us with questions via email at communications@aju.edu or phone at (310) 440-1526.