



The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is a federal public health agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It was created by the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (also known as the Superfund legislation). ATSDR's mission is to serve the public by using the best science, taking responsive public health actions, and providing trusted health information to prevent harmful exposures and disease related to toxic substances.

Summary Fact Sheet March 2005

ATSDR Final Public Health Assessment for the *Stauffer Chemical Company Site Tarpon Springs, Florida*

This fact sheet provides a summary of the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR) final public health assessment for the Stauffer Chemical Company (Stauffer) site in Tarpon Springs, Florida. The public health assessment was prepared in response to community health concerns and to recommendations provided in the January 2001 ATSDR Ombudsman Report of Findings and Recommendations. ATSDR released the public health assessment document in April 2003 to the public and other interested parties for review and comment. ATSDR has now issued the final public health assessment, which includes the comments received on the previously released document and ATSDR's responses to the comments. Overall, ATSDR's major public health findings are the same as those presented in the April 2003 release of the public health assessment.

What is a public health assessment (PHA)?

A public health assessment reviews available information about hazardous substances at a site and evaluates whether exposure to the substances might cause any harm to people. In making these determinations, ATSDR looks at three primary sources of information:

1. Environmental data, such as information about the contaminants and ways people could come in contact with them. For the Stauffer site, ATSDR evaluated environmental sampling data for contaminants in soil, slag (glassy residue), shallow and deep groundwater, drinking water from private and commercial supply wells, surface water and sediment in the Anclote River, ambient (outdoor) air, and workplace air (inside the Stauffer plant).
2. Health data, including available information on community rates of illness or disease compared with rates among other communities. ATSDR reviewed information regarding rates of certain types of cancer (i.e., those that might be caused by exposure to chemicals from the Stauffer site) in the Tarpon Springs area and compared those rates with the cancer rates for the State of Florida.
3. Community concerns, such as reports from the public about how the site affects their health or quality of life. A number of Tarpon Springs residents were particularly concerned about the potential impact of Stauffer's past air emissions on the health of the surrounding community, including students who attended Gulfside Elementary School while Stauffer was in operation. Some residents also expressed concerns about the potential effects of occupational exposures on the health of former Stauffer workers.

While preparing this public health assessment, ATSDR worked closely with community members and leaders, local and state health and environmental officials, citizens' groups, and stakeholders interested in sharing pertinent site information and concerns.

What were the findings of ATSDR's PHA for the Stauffer site?

After reviewing public comments and additional information, ATSDR reached the following conclusions regarding past, current, and future exposures to contaminants associated with the Stauffer site. These conclusions are consistent with ATSDR's April 2003 findings.

Past Exposures:

- Before 1982, the Stauffer site was a public health hazard because of harmful levels of air pollution from the Stauffer plant and from other local sources; sulfur dioxide gas and airborne particulate matter were the main pollutants of concern.
- Stauffer workers were intermittently exposed to asbestos-containing materials and other contaminants such as carbon monoxide, chromium, hydrogen sulfide, lead, silica, and sulfur dioxide at levels that could cause an increased risk of cancer or other adverse health effects. These conclusions, however, are based on an evaluation of limited sampling data that were collected from 1972–1981; no worker exposure data are available for the first 25 years of Stauffer's operations (1947–1971).
- A few private water supply wells located near the Stauffer site contained arsenic or lead at levels that might cause adverse health effects. However, the elevated arsenic and lead levels were not believed to be related to groundwater contamination at the Stauffer site.

Current Exposures:

- Currently, the Stauffer site is not a public health hazard because people are not being exposed to site contaminants at harmful levels. Since the Stauffer

plant ceased operations in 1981, access to the site has been restricted. In addition, most buildings, equipment, and chemicals—which could pose a health and safety hazard—have been removed from the site.

Future Exposures:

- Because of elevated levels of arsenic in on-site soil and gamma radiation from naturally occurring radium in on-site slag, the Stauffer site could be a future public health hazard if the property were developed for residential use.

What are ATSDR's recommendations and planned follow-up actions?

Continue to restrict access to the site to prevent exposure to site contaminants such as radiation and arsenic. Also, establish institutional controls (e.g., deed restrictions) to prevent development of the site for residential use.

- In their comments on the initial release public health assessment, Stauffer Management Company indicated that they agreed to deed-restrict the site so that it can never be used for residential development.

Provide health education to residents, former Gulfside Elementary students, former Stauffer workers, and health care providers.

- ATSDR provided health information to area residents and former students of Gulfside Elementary school through (1) distribution of community newsletters (January 2002, July 2002, October 2003, and December 2004); (2) distribution of chemical-specific and exposure-related fact sheets and booklets; and (3) discussions at community meetings, public availability/poster sessions, and town-hall meetings (August 2001, January 2002, May 2002, April 2003, and October 2003). In early 2004, ATSDR mailed a letter and several exposure-related fact sheets to former Gulfside Elementary students who attended the school while the Stauffer plant was in operation (i.e., from 1978 through 1981).

- ATSDR will provide health education, including information about preventing respiratory diseases, to former Stauffer workers by summer 2005.
- ATSDR, by summer 2005, will provide to local health care providers health education, including guidance for taking patients' environmental exposure histories and contaminant-specific case studies and fact sheets.

Provide a summary fact sheet about the public health assessment in Greek to meet the needs of the Tarpon Springs community.

- ATSDR will translate this fact sheet into Greek and make it available to members of the Tarpon Springs community whose primary language is Greek.

Develop and implement appropriate follow-up health activities for former Stauffer workers.

- ATSDR is conducting a mortality study of former workers. Scientists will look at the causes of death for former workers who died before January 1, 2003. Currently, ATSDR is in the data collection phase of the study. The study report should be available in late 2005.
- ATSDR is conducting respiratory health evaluations for former workers who were employed 5 years or longer in phosphate ore processing or phosphorus production activities. Medical evaluations are being conducted from October 2004 through April 2005 at a clinic in Holiday, Florida. A community report is to be released in early summer 2005. For more information, please contact **Steve Inserra**, ATSDR Project Coordinator, toll free at 1-888-422-8737, extension 0564.

Conduct public health surveillance.

- ATSDR is working with the Florida Department of Health to evaluate the incidence of mesothelioma and lung cancer in neighborhoods near the Stauffer site for the years 2000–2002. Data analysis is in progress, and results should be available by spring 2005.

Where can I review the public health assessment?

The final public health assessment is available on the ATSDR Web site at http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/PHA/region_4.html. You can also review the document at the following repositories:

Tarpon Springs Public Library
138 East Lemon Street
Tarpon Springs, Florida

Pasco County Library, South Holiday Branch
4649 Mile Stretch Drive
Holiday, Florida

How can I get more information about the public health assessment or ATSDR's work in Tarpon Springs?

If you have questions or need additional information, please call **LaFreta Dalton**, toll-free at 1-888-42ATSDR (1-888-422-8737) Monday–Friday from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm.

For more information about ATSDR, please visit our Web site at www.atsdr.cdc.gov.



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