



Agency for Toxic Substances
and Disease Registry
Atlanta GA 30333

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Requests ATSDR Health Consultation for the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor Superfund Site, Bainbridge Island, Washington

ATSDR is the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, a federal public health agency. ATSDR is part of the Public Health Service in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ATSDR is not a regulatory agency like the EPA. ATSDR's mission is to prevent exposure and adverse human health effects and diminished quality of life associated with exposure to hazardous substances from waste sites, unplanned releases, and other sources of pollution present in the environment. ATSDR provides public health advice and recommendations to EPA regarding health concerns around hazardous waste sites.

Earlier this year, EPA requested an ATSDR health consultation for the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor Superfund site. EPA requested this consultation seeking ATSDR's advice on potential public health issues related to real or possible human exposure to toxic material at the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor site. In part, EPA requested the health consultation to facilitate future Pritchard Park development plans of the City of Bainbridge Island and the Park District.

ATSDR will be looking at all areas of the Wyckoff/Eagle Harbor site including the West Harbor area (currently the WSDOT ferry maintenance facility) and the former Wyckoff wood-treating facility. Some of the questions that have been asked include:

- Is it safe for my children to use the beach?
- Is it safe to swim in the water?
- Can I eat the fish or shellfish?
- Can I safely visit the East Beach?
- Is it safe to harvest and eat berries from the site?
- Am I at risk from contamination from the "point"?
- Is it safe to use the trail system on the hillside?

If you have questions or concerns that you would like addressed by ATSDR's health consultation, please contact:

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WHAT IS ATSDR?

ATSDR is the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, a federal public health agency. ATSDR is part of the Public Health Service in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ATSDR is not a regulatory agency like the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Created by Superfund legislation in 1980, ATSDR's mission is to prevent exposure and adverse human health effects and diminished quality of life associated with exposure to hazardous substances from waste sites, unplanned releases, and other sources of pollution present in the environment. Through its programs—including surveillance, registries, health studies, environmental health education, and applied substance-specific research—and by working with other federal, state, and local government agencies, ATSDR acts to protect public health.

WHAT IS A HEALTH CONSULTATION?

An ATSDR Health Consultation is not the same thing as a medical exam, a community health study, or a Public Health Assessment. It can sometimes lead to those things, as well as to other public health activities.

A Health Consultation provides advice on a specific public health issue related to real or possible human exposure to toxic material. Anyone can request a Health Consultation. ATSDR receives the most requests from EPA and state and local health and environmental departments, and provides about 1,000 Health Consultations per year.

A Health Consultation is a way for ATSDR to respond quickly to a need for health information on toxic substances and to make recommendations for actions to protect the public's health. ATSDR staff evaluate information available about toxic material at the site, determine whether people might be exposed to it, and report what harm exposure might cause. Health Consultations may consider—

- what the levels (or "concentrations") of hazardous substances are
- whether people might be exposed to contamination and how (through "exposure pathways" such as breathing air, drinking or contacting water, contacting or eating soil, or eating food)
- what harm the substances might cause to people (or the contaminants' "toxicity")
- whether working or living nearby might affect people's health
- other dangers to people, such as unsafe buildings, abandoned mine shafts, or other physical hazards

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER THE HEALTH CONSULTATION?

Every Health Consultation includes ATSDR's conclusions about public health hazards and recommendations for actions to protect the public's health. ATSDR's recommendations cover many activities by EPA, state environmental and health agencies, and ATSDR.

For example, ATSDR recommendations can contribute to—

- site cleanup
- keeping people away from contamination and physical dangers—for example, by fencing the site
- giving residents acceptable drinking water
- relocating exposed people
- community environmental health education for residents and health care providers to inform them about site contaminants, harmful health effects, and ways to reduce or prevent health effects
- an ATSDR or state health study

In addition, a Health Consultation can lead to other ATSDR activities—specifically, a Public Health Assessment or Public Health Advisory.

ATSDR Public Health Assessments report on sites but in more detail. They rely on three main types of information—

- *environmental data*, such as information available on contaminants and how people could come in contact with them
- *health data*, including available information on communitywide rates of illness, disease, and death compared with national and state rates
- *community concerns*, such as reports from the public about how the site affects their health or quality of life

Public Health Advisories are notices from ATSDR's administrator to EPA's administrator. They are used when sites pose an immediate and significant threat to people.

Fact sheets are available on Public Health Assessments, Public Health Advisories, and other ATSDR activities. If you want to know more about ATSDR, or if you have health concerns about a site or information to share about ways people might have been or might now be exposed to hazardous substances, please contact the ATSDR Community Involvement Team, visit the ATSDR web site, or call the ATSDR toll-free information line.

Community Involvement Team
ATSDR - Division of Health Assessment and Consultation
1600 Clifton Road, NE (E56)
Atlanta, Georgia 30333

ATSDR web site at <http://atsdr1.atsdr.cdc.gov:8080/>

ATSDR information line (888) 42-ATSDR, that's (888) 422-8737

About ATSDR

1. What is the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)?

ATSDR is the principal federal public health agency involved with hazardous waste issues. The agency is responsible for preventing or reducing the harmful effects of exposure to hazardous substances on human health and quality of life. ATSDR is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The agency was created by the Superfund law in 1980. That law started a program to find and clean up the most dangerous hazardous waste sites. ATSDR was formally organized in 1985 and is responsible for carrying out the health-related parts of the Superfund law and of other laws that protect the public from hazardous wastes and environmental spills of hazardous substances. It is responsible for determining, as best as possible, whether people have harmful health effects from their exposure to hazardous substances.



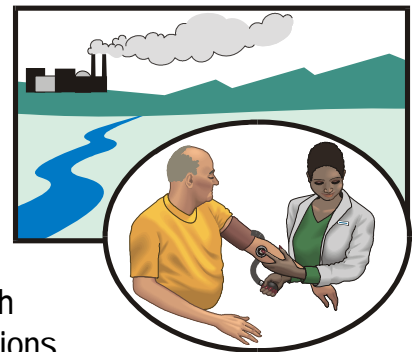
2. Where is ATSDR located? How big is it?

ATSDR's headquarters are in Atlanta, Georgia. The agency has 10 regional offices and an office in Washington, D.C. The multidisciplinary staff of approximately 400 includes epidemiologists, physicians, toxicologists, engineers, public health educators, and support staff.

3. What does ATSDR do?

ATSDR does a number of activities to help prevent or reduce the harmful effects of exposure to hazardous substances, including these:

- ATSDR advises the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), as well as other federal and state agencies, community members, and other interested parties, on the health impacts of Superfund sites. ATSDR identifies communities where people might be exposed to hazardous substances in the environment. The agency also determines how hazardous a site is and recommends actions that need to be taken to safeguard people's health. It does this by issuing public health advisories, public health assessments, and health consultations.
- ATSDR conducts studies in some communities at or near Superfund sites to determine if people's health has been affected by their exposure to hazardous substances. ATSDR also funds research conducted by universities, state agencies, and others who study the relationship between exposure to hazardous substances and disease.



- ATSDR educates doctors, other health care professionals, and communities about the health effects of hazardous substances and how to lessen their exposure to hazardous substances. For example, the agency has developed educational programs that teach children and parents ways to reduce lead exposure.



- ATSDR conducts and funds studies on hazardous substances. The agency has published documents called “toxicological profiles” on many of the hazardous substances most commonly found at Superfund sites.

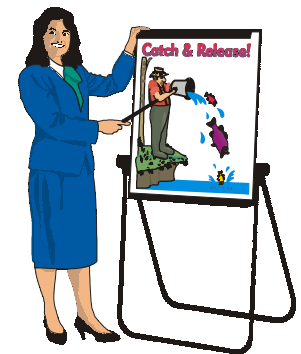
- ATSDR provides technical support and advice to other federal agencies, states, and local governments that respond to accidental spills or releases of hazardous substances, such as from train wrecks, fires, and other emergencies.

- ATSDR maintains four subregistries of people who have been exposed to hazardous substances—trichloroethylene (TCE), trichloroethane (TCA), benzene, and dioxin. These subregistries track health data from participants to learn more about the health consequences of their exposure to low levels of these chemicals.

4. What are some of the things ATSDR does to help a community that may be exposed to hazardous substances?

ATSDR can help communities in a variety of ways, including working with them to resolve their health concerns, determining whether the community is actually being exposed to hazardous substances, educating residents about health hazards, and training health care providers.

One of ATSDR’s key responsibilities is to determine the extent of hazard to the public’s health from hazardous substances at Superfund and other hazardous waste sites. An important part of determining whether a hazard exists is to meet with members of the community to hear their health concerns.



ATSDR can take steps to help communities deal with those health concerns. For example, at a site in southwestern Virginia, residents were concerned about children eating contaminated fish from a river where fishing was banned. ATSDR worked with the community to develop an educational program to teach children not to eat fish from the river. ATSDR also works with local health care providers to ensure they have the information they need about possible exposures to hazardous substances in their community.

ATSDR may send staff to a community to draw blood or collect urine to determine whether people are being exposed to a hazardous substance. ATSDR has been able to reassure some communities that people there were not being exposed to hazardous substances. And, in other cases, after determining that some people were being exposed to hazardous substances, ATSDR has been able to advise communities about how to reduce their exposure.

In some cases, ATSDR provides medical monitoring for communities exposed to hazardous substances. The medical monitoring is intended to screen for specific diseases or health problems that are likely to have been caused by exposure to a specific hazardous substance. Communities must meet seven criteria to be selected for medical monitoring.

5. What are some of the things ATSDR cannot do to help a community?

There are some things that ATSDR does not have the legal authority to do. ATSDR cannot provide medical care or treatment to people who have been exposed to hazardous substances, even if the exposure has made them ill. ATSDR also cannot provide funds for relocation or to clean up a site.



6. How is ATSDR's role in helping communities different from EPA's role?

Unlike EPA, ATSDR is not a regulatory agency. ATSDR is a public health agency that advises EPA on the health aspects of hazardous waste sites or spills. ATSDR makes recommendations to EPA when specific actions are needed to protect the public's health. For example, ATSDR might recommend providing an alternative water supply, removing contaminated material, or restricting access to a site. EPA usually follows these recommendations. However, ATSDR cannot require EPA to follow its recommendations.



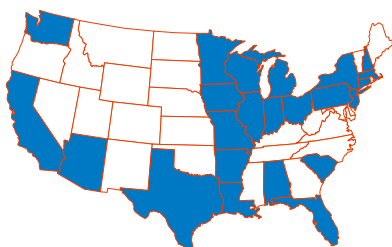
7. How does ATSDR become involved with a site? How can I get ATSDR involved with a site?

ATSDR is required by the Superfund law to become involved with all sites that are on or proposed for the National Priorities List (NPL). Specifically, ATSDR conducts public health assessments of NPL sites, as well as of all sites proposed for the NPL.

EPA, states, local governments, or other federal agencies may request ATSDR's help with a site, such as in cases of accidental spills or releases. Anyone may request that ATSDR do a health consultation. Most requests for health consultations come from EPA and state and local agencies.

Anyone may also petition ATSDR to conduct public health assessments of sites. For more information about how to petition ATSDR to conduct a public health assessment, call ATSDR's toll-free information line, (800) 447-1544.

8. How does ATSDR work with states and local health departments?



ATSDR has cooperative agreements with 23 states to conduct site-related public health assessments or health consultations, health studies, and health education. In states that have cooperative agreements, ATSDR provides technical assistance and oversees site evaluations and related activities done by state staff. ATSDR also assists local health departments.

9. Does ATSDR assist communities located near hazardous waste sites that are not on the NPL?

Yes. More than half of the sites ATSDR has worked at are not on the NPL.

10. What information does ATSDR provide through its Internet web site?

Information that can be accessed through ATSDR's web site includes these items:

- information about ATSDR;
- a database containing information on all sites ATSDR has worked at;
- short, easy-to-read fact sheets on 60 of the most common contaminants at Superfund sites;
- links to related sites.



ATSDR's Internet address is <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov>



11. Who can I call at ATSDR for more information?

For more information, contact ATSDR's toll-free information line:
(888) 422-8737

ATSDR
AGENCY FOR TOXIC SUBSTANCES
AND DISEASE REGISTRY