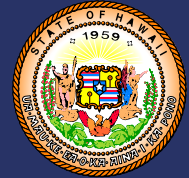




Activities in Hawaii



ATSDR in Partnership with Hawaii

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is the lead public health agency responsible for implementing the health-related provisions of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980 (CERCLA). ATSDR is an Atlanta-based federal agency with more than 400 employees and an annual budget for 2002 of \$78 million. ATSDR is responsible for assessing the presence and nature of health hazards at specific Superfund sites, helping to prevent or reduce further exposure and illnesses resulting from those hazards, and expanding the knowledge base about the health effects of exposure to hazardous substances.

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ATSDR works closely with state agencies to carry out its mission of preventing exposure to contaminants at hazardous waste sites and preventing adverse health effects. ATSDR provides funding and technical assistance to states and other partners through cooperative agreements and grants to identify and evaluate environmental health threats to communities. These resources enable state and local health departments and other grantees to further investigate environmental health concerns and to educate communities.

ATSDR Site-Specific Activities Public Health Assessment-Related Activities

One of the agency's important mandates is to conduct **public health assessments** of all National Priorities List (NPL) sites and of other sites where a significant threat to public health might exist. **Ten** sites have been designated to the NPL in **Hawaii**.

A **public health assessment** is a written, comprehensive evaluation of available data and information on the release of hazardous substances into the environment in a specific geographic area. Such releases are assessed for current or future impact on public health. ATSDR, in collaboration with public health and environmental officials from **Hawaii**, has conducted **10** health assessments in the state, including the following example:

- **Naval Computer and Telecommunications Area Master Station, Pacific (NCTAMS PAC)**

Wahiawa and Naval Radio Transmitter Facility Lualualei—The NCTAMS PAC

NPL site is an active military installation in **Wahiawa**. In a review of environmental data collected at the site, ATSDR identified three potential exposure pathways. ATSDR released a public health assessment in December 1998 that evaluated those pathways and categorized NCTAMS PAC as no apparent public health hazard.

Two of the exposure pathways involved the potential for contaminated soil from NCTAMS PAC to migrate via surface water runoff and affect the downgradient aquatic ecosystem and fish. ATSDR determined that no pathway for exposure existed, so soil contaminants at NCTAMS PAC do not pose any public health hazards.

The third potential exposure pathway involved three former polychlorinated biphenyl (PCB)-contaminated transformer sites in residential areas. PCB contamination did migrate off-site, but detected levels were generally low and sporadic. ATSDR concluded that no apparent public health hazards exist from past exposure to PCB-contaminated soil.

The community expressed health concerns about a possible association between childhood leukemia and electromagnetic fields (EMFs) from the radio transmission towers at NRTF **Lualualei**. The **Hawaii Department of Health (HDOH)** investigated an increased incidence of childhood leukemia in the area around the facility. This study did not show a clear association between the incidence of childhood leukemia and emissions from the radio towers. ATSDR concluded that childhood leukemia in the area surrounding NRTF Lualualei cannot be attributed to the EMFs from the radio transmission towers. No public health hazards appear to exist from exposure to the radio transmission towers.

ATSDR has conducted 10 health assessments and 12 health consultations in the state of Hawaii.

A **health consultation** is a written or oral response from ATSDR to a specific request for information about health risks related to a specific site, chemical release, or hazardous material. It is a more limited response than a public health assessment is. To date, **12** documented health consultations have been conducted at **eight** sites in **Hawaii**. Following is an example of a health consultation conducted in the state:

- **Honolulu Skeet Club, Kailua**—The Honolulu Skeet Club is a former a shooting range in **Honolulu**. In 1974, the site was developed into residential lots. ATSDR was asked by a private citizen to evaluate the results of arsenic- and lead-contaminated environmental samples (i.e., sand, sediment, air) from the site and to provide a public health opinion about these results. **HDOH** collected a limited number of samples from a shoreline at a beach and a residential area near the site.

A health consultation released in November 1998 concluded that lead pellets in the beach sand were difficult to get to; therefore, the pellets did not pose a health threat. Concentrations of arsenic and lead in beach sand samples were below levels of health concern, and concentrations in air samples were below detection limits. Concentrations of arsenic and lead in beach sediment samples were elevated. However, it is unlikely that frequent human contact to the contaminated beach sediment would occur from beach activities; therefore, the beach sediment is not of health concern.

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ATSDR Emergency Response Activities

ATSDR takes information acquired through listing hazardous substances, preparing toxicological profiles, and conducting research and, when requested, applies it to real-life incidents involving hazardous substances.

Emergency response staff members provide health-related technical support to federal, state, and local responders during emergencies caused by the release of hazardous substances. As resources permit, they perform time-critical consultations.

Emergency response coordinators have immediate access to various experts, including chemists, toxicologists, environmental scientists, and medical professionals. To provide immediate support, site-specific consultation teams can be convened 24 hours a day, usually within 20 minutes.

At the request of U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regional offices and other federal, state, and local agencies, ATSDR emergency response personnel respond to on-site emergencies, as well as to requests for information related to other acute events. ATSDR assisted at the following event in **Hawaii**.

- **Mercury Spill, Puuwai Momi Housing Complex**—In March 2001, children from a neighborhood near **Honolulu** collected about 1.5 gallons of elemental mercury from an abandoned building and contaminated several homes in the Puuwai Momi housing complex and at least one area school. **HDH** contacted ATSDR for information on health effects, action levels, and cleanup methods. ATSDR also facilitated the analysis of urine samples with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and environmental sampling of potentially contaminated media by EPA.

HDH assisted residents evacuated from their homes, determined locations for environmental evaluation, and identified children who had contact with the mercury. Within 2 weeks of the initial contact, all units in the housing complex were evaluated, and contaminated units were cleaned up using criteria provided by EPA, HDH, and ATSDR.

Resource Materials

ATSDR develops materials that public health professionals and medical care providers can use to assess the public health impacts of chemical exposures. Resources are available in print, on the ATSDR Web site, and on CD-ROM. For example, medical management guidelines are available for acute chemical exposures to more than 40 chemicals. ATSDR's toxicological profiles comprehensively describe health effects; pathways of human exposure; and the behavior of more than 250 hazardous substances in air, soil, and water at hazardous waste sites. In the last 5 years, more than **5,700** of these profiles have been sent to requesters, including representatives of federal, state, and local health and environmental departments; academic institutions; private industries; and nonprofit organizations in **Hawaii**. ATSDR has also developed extensive resources for community members.

For more information, contact ATSDR toll-free at 1-888-42ATSDR (1-888-422-8737) or visit the ATSDR Web page at www.atsdr.cdc.gov.