



ATSDR MEDIA ANNOUNCEMENT

ATSDR Releases Report about Exposure to PCBs at Oak Ridge Reservation, TN Agency provides fish-consumption recommendations for residents

For Immediate Release: December 4, 2006

ATLANTA - Exposure to polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs -- a chemical used as a coolant and lubricant in electrical equipment) from the Oak Ridge Reservation does not pose a public health hazard, says the public health assessment released by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). However, as a public health precaution, the agency suggests residents limit eating certain types of local fish.

ATSDR conducted the report to evaluate whether past and current exposures to PCBs in the air, fish, geese, turtles or nearby off-site waterways could cause illness. The waterways examined in the report are the Clinch River, East Fork Poplar Creek, Poplar Creek, Lower Watts Bar Reservoir and the Tennessee River.

Based on the levels of PCBs detected in fish, geese and turtles, it is safe to eat up to one meal of any type of fish per month. One adult fish meal is considered to be 8 ounces (1/2 pound). Children are assumed to eat one-third this amount. However, ATSDR suggests limiting the consumption of certain species of fish:

- Largemouth Bass. It is safe for adults to eat up to three meals of largemouth bass per week. Children, however, should only eat one meal of largemouth bass per week from the Clinch River and no more than two meals of largemouth bass per week from the Tennessee River.
- Catfish, striped bass, white bass and hybrid bass (striped bass-white bass). It is safe for adults to eat one meal per week of catfish, striped bass, white bass, and hybrid bass. Children, however, should only eat one meal per month of these fish.
- Sunfish and Canada goose. Sunfish and Canada goose muscle are safe to eat in any amount.
- Turtle. Turtle meat is safe to eat in any amount, but no one should eat turtle fat, turtle eggs, and turtle organs.

PCBs in local waterways came from plant operations at the Oak Ridge Reservation's Y-12, K-25, X-10 and S-50 sites where a large amount of electrical energy required the use of the chemical. During these operations and because of former waste disposal practices, oily PCB fluids were spilled onto the ground and released into nearby creeks and ponds.

The public health assessment is available to the public for review and comment, however ATSDR will not be able to address comments or make this report final unless

additional U.S. Department of Energy funds are received. Community members are encouraged to submit comments during the public comment period, as public comments are an important part of the public record.

The public health assessment is available at the following locations:

Oak Ridge Public Library
Civic Center
Oak Ridge, Tenn.

Harriman Public Library
1 Waldon Ave.
Harriman, Tenn.

Kingston City Library
1004 Bradford Way
Kingston, Tenn.

Roane State Community
College
276 Patton Lane
Harriman, Tenn.

Rockwood Public Library
117 N. Front Ave.
Rockwood, Tenn.

Department of Energy
Information Center
475 Oak Ridge
Turnpike
Oak Ridge, Tenn.
865-241-4780

The ATSDR Oak Ridge Field Office is now closed. Members of the community with questions about this public health assessment may contact Environmental Health Scientist Jack Hanley at 404-498-0358 or jhanley@cdc.gov; or Health Communication Specialist Marilyn Palmer Horton at 404-498-1751 or mpalmer@cdc.gov. Or, for more information about ATSDR activities at the Oak Ridge Reservation, visit www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/oakridge.

ATSDR, a federal public health agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, evaluates the human health effects of exposure to hazardous substances.

###

Members of the news media can request an interview with ATSDR staff by calling the NCEH/ATSDR Office of Communication at 770-488-0700.

[Back to ATSDR Home page](#)

Updated October 25, 2006
For more information, contact ATSDR at:
770-488-0700 or [e-mail](#) (news media)

[ATSDR Home](#) | [Search](#) | [Index](#) | [Glossary](#) | [Contact Us](#)
[About ATSDR](#) | [News Archive](#) | [ToxFAQs](#) | [Public Health Assessments](#)
[Privacy Policy](#) | [External Links Disclaimer](#) | [Accessibility](#)
[US Department of Health and Human Services](#)