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Hazardous Substances & Public Health
Protecting the Public Health

Volume 5, Number 1, Winter 1995

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ATSDR Home Page

FEATURES

Hazardous Substances Database Is Important Training Tool

Fewer emergencies, injuries, and deaths involving hazardous substances are expected to occur in the future thanks to lessons learned through a database tracking these events.

The Hazardous Substances Emergency Events Surveillance (HSEES) database was started in 1990 by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) to track the consequences of hazardous substances emergencies on public health. Such emergencies include those that take place during transportation or at fixed facilities, such as manufacturing plants. Hazardous substances, such as volatile organic compounds or acids, are those that will or may reasonably be anticipated to cause injury or death under certain circumstances.

In 1993 alone, a total of 3,945 hazardous substances emergencies were reported to the HSEES system by the 11 participating states. These incidents resulted in injuries to 2,269 people and 16 deaths, according to the 1993 HSEES annual report.

Database Uses

ATSDR and state health departments are now using information from the HSEES database to educate emergency responders and others about where, when, and how hazardous substances emergencies are likely to occur. This knowledge could help prevent future emergencies and decrease the number of injuries and deaths if incidents do occur.

In essence, the database provides people with information about risk factors contributing to these events.

"The ultimate goal of HSEES is to find out what the risk factors are that make these emergency events more likely to happen," said V. Ramana Dhara, MD, an ATSDR health officer. "We also need to train physicians and emergency responders to look out and be prepared for the health effects of these chemicals."

ATSDR and state health departments share information from the HSEES database with state emergency response and planning commissions, firefighters, hazardous materials (HAZMAT) teams, emergency medical personnel, physicians, and industries. States have reported to ATSDR that they are using the information to improve training and emergency response procedures, and to improve enforcement of state and federal regulations and codes for production, storage, transportation, and use of hazardous substances, according to the 1993 HSEES annual report.

"We need to train physicians and emergency responders to be prepared for the health effects of these chemicals."

ATSDR is also currently developing a pamphlet based on HSEES information for local emergency planning committees. The information will help the committees prepare for what might possibly happen in a hazardous substances release.

HSEES is the first comprehensive system available for recording the health consequences of hazardous substances emergencies, said Irene Hall, PhD, an ATSDR epidemiologist. These consequences include injury, death, and evacuation.

Lessons Learned

What ATSDR scientists have learned in 4 years of data collection is that certain aspects of emergency events involving hazardous substances appear to be consistent:

- Most incidents (93%) involve release of only one chemical,
- Most incidents (84%) occur at facilities and not during transportation,
- Industry employees (58% of victims) are more likely than emergency responders or the public to be injured,
- Most of the employees injured (73%) used no personal protective equipment, and
- Respiratory (31%) and eye (16%) irritation are the most common injuries.

HSEES data have also revealed that volatile organic compounds, herbicides, and acids were the chemicals most commonly released during emergencies. However, the substances involved in the most events did not necessarily result in the most injuries. For example, although chlorine was involved in only 3% of events in 1993, over 32% of these events resulted in injury, indicating chlorine's greater potential for harm.

"It helps to know exactly what the most commonly released materials are so we can tell physicians what to focus on," Dr. Dhara said. Currently, 14 states report to the HSEES: Alabama, Colorado, Iowa, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Rhode Island, Texas, Washington, and Wisconsin. ATSDR expects to add a few more states each year.

For information about or from the HSEES database and copies of the 1993 HSEES annual report, contact Irene Hall, PhD, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, 1600 Clifton Road, Mailstop E31, Atlanta, Georgia 30333; telephone (404)639-6203; internet ixh1@cdc.gov

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Nurse Educators Seek Expanded Role as Environmental Health Educators

Nurses can help people live healthier lives by making them more aware of environmental hazards, said nurse educators from historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) in the Mississippi Delta region.

These nurse educators, who attended an environmental health course offered by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), say they want to train students in nursing intervention practices concerning toxic substances and hazardous waste.

"The most acute need is an awareness of what hazards are in our own backyards," said Anita Hansberry, RN, MS, an assistant professor from Southern University's School of Nursing, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, who attended the course. "We can empower people by informing them of things that affect their health and what they can do about them."

The November training session marked the first time nurse educators from HBCUs in the Mississippi Delta area participated in the ATSDR course, "Clues To Unraveling the Association Between Illness and Environmental Exposure."

The nurse educators learned about environmental health issues, client evaluation and intervention, environmental health information resources, nursing evaluation at the community level, health-related activities, and concepts of health risk communication.

Nurses were targeted by this program because they are front-line health professionals who are often the first called upon to address health problems potentially associated with chronic and acute environmental exposures. Educating these particular nurse educators about environmental health is especially important because they teach nurses who will serve within the Mississippi Delta - a 219-county strip along the Mississippi River containing at least 40 hazardous waste sites on the US Environmental Protection Agency's EXIT National Priorities List.

Their training supports a special initiative, the Mississippi Delta Project, begun in 1994. The purpose of this project is to reduce the threat of key environmental hazards through education and prevent them from affecting public health and the environment in the Mississippi Delta, with an emphasis on persons of color and disadvantaged communities.

Five instructors from Howard University's College of Nursing, one from Southern University's School of Nursing (Louisiana), and one from Alcorn State University (Mississippi) took the day-long Clues course on November 28 in Atlanta. Howard University holds a grant to educate nurses from HBCUs in the Mississippi Delta region. The participants said they will be passing on what they learned about environmental health to those they teach and to the communities they serve. They will also be selecting sites for nursing intervention programs in the Mississippi Delta. One of the sites already selected is the Newsom Brothers site in Columbia, Mississippi. This site is a former wood preserving facility where a number of chemicals were used. The surrounding community is concerned that some health effects people are now experiencing may be caused by past exposure to toxic chemicals. In December, ATSDR and Public Health Service staff visited the site with Anne Mitchem-Davis, RN, MS, chair of senior studies at Howard University College of Nursing who attended the Clues course. The trip was a fact-finding mission for the nursing intervention project.

"I will use the information from the trip to help me as I prepare the teaching modules and work with community health nurses in that area," Mitchem-Davis said.

During the ATSDR training session, the nurse educators agreed that environmental health education should be part of every nurse's training and can be incorporated into existing curricula. For example, environmental health concepts can be incorporated by broadening community health assessments to include environmental health questions. Environmental health concepts can be taught during toxicology training, and can be the focus of independent studies.

"Part of the piece is already there because we have to look at the community as a whole," Hansberry said. "Adding environmental health education is just enhancing what we're already doing."

Howard University College of Nursing already has a community health nursing course that includes an environmental health element.

"We will not only be expanding that unit, but when we develop a community assessment tool, we will put greater emphasis on the environment," Mitchem-Davis said. In addition, environmental health concepts are being integrated into all clinical nursing courses."

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From the Tribes

New Cooperative Agreement Programs Allow Tribes To Develop Environmental Health Programs

Cooperative agreements between ATSDR and Indian tribes enable tribes to develop programs and materials to educate communities about hazardous substances in the environment. Four new tribal cooperative agreement projects supported by ATSDR were awarded funding starting in October 1994. These cooperative agreements

include projects for community and health care professional education and training, development of resource materials, and formation of communication networks among tribes.

Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council: Program Will Build Capacity, Expertise in Environmental Health

The initial proposal from the Eight Northern Indian Pueblos Council (ENIPC) is aimed at building Pueblo capacity in the basic and applied sciences. The program's activities will be developed to provide environmental health information and to build expertise related to hazardous substances in Pueblo communities. The program will also be designed and tested for possible expansion to other minority communities in northern New Mexico and for use by other American Indian and Alaska Native communities. The program includes a needs assessment process and emphasizes evaluation. ENIPC proposes to involve a variety of community resources in the project, including an advisory committee, Pueblo community communication liaisons, and staff and students from the local community college.

Ely Shoshone Tribe: Collaboration Will Focus on Training, Creating Network of Tribes

This project is a collaborative effort involving ATSDR, the Ely Shoshone Tribe, two Native American community organizations (Citizens' Alert Native American Program and Native Americans for a Clean Environment), a public health research institute (Childhood Cancer Research Institute), and a university research center (Center for Technology, Environment, and Development, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts). Tasks for the project include a training program for community trainers and health care providers, and presentation of health care provider education modules by scientific staff. Project members propose to build a network of tribes (Western Shoshone tribes, Paiute Tribe, Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma, and Creek Tribe) that are concerned about environmental health, particularly radiation issues. The proposal outlines plans to develop an evaluation report focusing on the possibility of using this model in outreach efforts to other American Indian communities.

Seneca Nation of Indians: Program Targets Behavior Change as Key to Preventing Hazardous Substance Exposure

The goal of the proposed program is to bring about behavioral changes in all Seneca Nation health providers and residents that will prevent or mitigate their exposure to hazardous substances. Proposed first-year activities include a needs assessment and development of educational resources, including a newsletter and resource guide. Two workshops will be conducted, one for community members about local contaminants of concern, potential risks of exposure, and measures to prevent exposure; and another for health care providers concerning environmental health issues. An evaluation component of the program will measure the effectiveness of first-year activities.

St. Regis Mohawk: Community Members, Health Care Providers Targeted To Receive Health Education

This tribal environmental health education program proposes to provide timely, culturally relevant information about environmental health hazards to both community members and community health care providers. Increased consultation among community members, their health care providers, and tribal environmental staff is another goal of the project. A variety of culturally appropriate communication channels, including radio shows, materials, training workshops, focus groups, and a newsletter, will be used. The 4-year project will begin with a study of community health risk perceptions and risk communication needs. Project leaders will collaborate with an advisory group and a task force, with additional community focus groups as needed.

State/Tribal Cooperative Programs

Besides the tribal cooperative agreement program, tribes are eligible for the state/tribal cooperative agreement program. The following tribal community health education efforts have been funded through the state/tribal

cooperative agreement program.

Prairie Island Indian Community: Community Members Will Help Train Others and Distribute Information About Hazardous Substances

The Prairie Island Indian community proposed a 1-year project to develop, implement, and evaluate educational activities for health professionals and communities concerned with human exposure to low-level radiation and other toxic substances in the environment. The community proposes to train health professionals, provide resource guides, and hold a health fair for community members. Tribal members will be part of the Environmental Committee, and will be involved in receiving and disseminating information and in training others.

Nez Perce Tribe: Patient Handbook Will Provide Information on Avoiding Exposure to Hazardous Substances

The threat of exposure to hazardous waste from the Hanford Nuclear facility and other nearby hazardous waste sites prompted the Nez Perce Tribe's project. Tribal and other local health care providers will be given educational material on the potential health effects and prevention of exposure to the waste. The Nez Perce Environmental Restoration and Waste Management Office received a 1-year, no-cost extension to develop and distribute a user-friendly patient handbook, which will contain information on actual risks, the effects of exposure, lifestyle changes to reduce risk, and available treatments for illness potentially caused by exposure. Referral information and a comprehensive bibliography are included.

For further information about these projects, call Christine Rosheim, DDS, MPH, at (404) 639-6205.

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Healthy Earth = Healthy Children = Healthy Future

National Tribal Environmental Council 2nd Annual National Conference Focuses on Environmental Health

The presence of many hazardous substances on American Indian and Alaska Native lands poses a threat both to health and to traditional lifestyles. Indian lands are frequently proposed as disposal sites for solid waste, industrial sludge, and nuclear waste, but few tribes have the capacity to regulate or protect their reservation lands from hazardous substances.

Members of the National Tribal Environmental Council (NTEC) believe we all share a global responsibility to protect the environment for future generations, which is why NTEC's second national conference focused on environmental health issues. NTEC is dedicated to working with and assisting tribes in protecting and preserving the reservation environment.

The conference, entitled "Healthy Earth = Healthy Children = Healthy Future," was held December 12-14, 1994, in Reno, Nevada. It brought together tribal environmental leaders and federal and intertribal representatives to discuss health hazards, risk communication, and education needs on the tribal level. Discussions focused on defining "environmental justice" for Indian communities, developing a legislative agenda for the 104th Congress, assessing current and future clean-up activities on Indian lands, and educating local communities about health risks associated with hazardous substances.

Ensuring Tribal Priorities

During a panel entitled "Administrative Update: Environmental Agenda," Indian leaders discussed how the Tribal Operations Committee (TOC) is working to ensure that the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) EXIT understands tribal priorities and works more closely with tribes to develop programs to meet tribal goals.

TOC is dedicated to establishing priorities for EPA and the Congressional Indian Affairs Committee to protect tribal interests, said Sadie Hoskie, director of the Navajo Nation EPA, who spoke about the role and purpose of TOC at the NTEC meeting. Some of TOC's priorities are to (1) provide legislative updates about tribal environmental issues to Congress, (2) develop ways to obtain federal funding for tribal environmental projects, (3) conduct tribal environmental needs assessments, and (4) increase federal support for TOC and tribal environmental programs.

Currently, TOC is focusing on improving delivery of EPA technical and financial assistance to tribes, and strengthening tribal environmental policy development in all environmental media programs. TOC is also responsible for supporting EPA tribal program development with tribes on a regional level.

To help meet these goals, the EPA American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) was established in October 1994. This office will seek information and feedback from the tribes and track Indian legislation, said AIEO Director Terry Williams at the NTEC conference. This office will also ensure that funds are provided to the tribes to establish tribal EPA offices, and that tribally developed priorities are followed by US EPA.

Defining Environmental Justice

The phrase "environmental justice" was first introduced when the Council on Environmental Quality noted that racial discrimination adversely affected the ability of the urban poor to control the quality of their environment. Later, the federal government committed itself to environmental justice for all minorities. Most recently, President Clinton affirmed his commitment to environmental justice by issuing an environmental justice executive order in February 1994. This order requires federal agencies to adhere to the principles of environmental justice.

"Environmental Justice: An Indian Definition" was the subject of a panel discussion during the NTEC meeting. Panel members emphasized that environmental justice for Indian tribes means that the federal government must live up to its trust responsibility to protect and preserve Indian lands and resources. Under constitutional and treaty law, this trust relationship is a unique government-to-government relationship between the federal government and Indian tribes that distinguishes Indian tribes from any other group of Americans because of their unique legal status as sovereign governments. The trust doctrine arises out of the congressional power over Indian affairs, and all branches of the federal government are obligated to work directly with tribal governments.

Protecting the Environment, Protecting the Children

The healthier the environment, the healthier the people living in it; therefore, keeping the environment healthy and protecting people from hazardous substances and other environmental hazards were also topics discussed at the meeting. The opening address, "Protecting the Environment, Protecting the Children," a presentation about the dangers of lead and pesticides, was given by Dr. Kenneth Olden, director of the National Institute of

Environmental Health Sciences. Other presentation topics included tribal air quality, solid and nuclear waste management, and response to hazardous materials emergencies.

Impact

As a whole, the NTEC meeting was an important step toward developing tribal environmental strategies for a healthier environment and served to strengthen the ability of tribes to take charge of protecting their own health and lands, according to Jerry Pardilla, NTEC interim director.

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NTEC Supports Tribal Environmental Activities

The National Tribal Environmental Council (NTEC) was formed in 1991 as a tribal membership organization dedicated to working with and assisting tribes in protecting and preserving the reservation environment. NTEC's mission is to enhance each tribe's ability to protect, preserve, and promote the wise management of air, land, and water for the benefit of current and future generations. NTEC is open to membership from federally recognized tribes throughout the United States and currently has 61 member tribes active in developing tribal environmental programs.

Among NTEC's goals are those which encourage federal government agencies to adopt and implement policies that fulfill the trust responsibility to tribes and that reflect the government-to-government relationship between tribes and the United States. NTEC seeks to support tribal governments in their efforts to protect, regulate, and manage their environmental resources according to their own priorities and values.

To assist tribes in developing solutions to their environmental needs, in the next several years NTEC will focus on developing and implementing programs in the following areas:

1. Communication and Education,
2. Resource Clearinghouse and Reference Library,
3. National Advocacy, and
4. Legal and Regulatory Support.

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From the States

Pets Linked to Arsenic Exposure

A 1994 exposure investigation at a hazardous waste site in Everett, Washington, suggests that household pets may be exposing their owners to arsenic.

The Everett Smelter operated from 1894 to 1912, producing lead, arsenic, and gold bullion for the American Smelting and Refining Company (ASARCO). The smelter was closed and seemed forgotten. Between the 1930s and 1950s, 22 homes were built on the site of the former 19-acre smelter. Another 200 homes, along with a low-income housing development and an apartment complex, were built near the contaminated area. During the 1970s, the area was zoned "mixed use" with residential and industrial properties. It wasn't until 1990 that the contaminated site was discovered during routine environmental testing by two nearby companies.

Arsenic is a naturally occurring element in the earth's crust. Manufacture of metals often releases inorganic arsenic into the air. Arsenic ingestion has been reported to increase the risk of liver, kidney, lung, and skin cancer. Testing revealed that 16 residential yards had soil concentrations with greater than 1,000 parts per million (ppm) of arsenic. The maximum soil concentration found was 727,000 ppm, in the yard of one on-site house. In 1991 and 1992, interim actions were instituted to minimize the potential exposure of residents to contaminated soil. Alleys and some driveways were paved, soil was replaced in some gardens, and sod was placed on exposed soil. Local residents were provided with information about the site through public meetings and mailings. ASARCO is currently buying out the property of the residents living on the site.

Local residents petitioned the Washington Departments of Health and Ecology for help. To determine if residents were currently being exposed to site-related arsenic, health authorities decided to conduct an exposure investigation. The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) offered support and consultation and provided resources for analyzing biological specimens of urine and hair.

The exposure investigation revealed that 87 of 95 persons tested had no detectable levels of arsenic in their urine. In fact, only one person had elevated urine arsenic levels of more than 50 $#181g/dL. The hair samples revealed that 6 of 95 persons had elevated levels of hair arsenic. One child had borderline levels of arsenic found in both urine and hair samples.

Investigators visited the homes of those persons with elevated arsenic levels to assess risk factors for exposure. Three households were visited, and occupational and environmental histories were collected from the members. One woman had elevated levels, but her husband did not. It was discovered that she was responsible for bathing, grooming, and caring for their pet German shepherd, which enjoys digging in the backyard. The family of four, all of whom had elevated levels of arsenic in hair samples, have an indoor/outdoor family cat and dog; both animals often sleep with family members. Results from the exposure investigation suggest that these pets may have been responsible for transporting some arsenic-contaminated soil and dust to their owners.

All residents are receiving health education information about how to minimize exposure.

The exposure investigation at the Everett Smelter site is the first of its kind conducted by ATSDR, in collaboration with the Washington Departments of Health and Ecology. ATSDR is currently conducting exposure investigations at two other hazardous waste sites, and more exposure investigations are planned.

In fiscal year 1995, the agency has set aside $400,000 to be used for exposure investigations. The objective of these investigations is to better detect human exposure through collecting and analyzing new data so that more appropriate and responsive public action can be undertaken. A site must first meet specific agency criteria before it is decided that an exposure investigation is needed. These criteria include (1) identifying a data gap in the exposure pathway, (2) determining if that data gap can be filled by collecting biological or environmental samples, and (3) practically applying the results of the samples to help protect public health.

For more information about ATSDR's exposure investigation activity, please contact Lee Sanderson, PhD, Division of Health Assessment and Consultation, ATSDR, 1600 Clifton Road, Mailstop E31, Atlanta, Georgia 30333; telephone (404) 639-0616; fax (404) 639-0655.

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CDC Fax Information Service Offers Quick Access to Health Information

Health and prevention information is available easier and faster through a new facsimile service offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). EXIT This 24-hour automated service allows callers to receive needed information by fax in a matter of minutes by calling (404) 332-4565.

Some of the topics covered by the system are immunization, infection control, biosafety, and injury prevention and control. The system also offers health requirements for international travelers and occupational health information.

The system allows callers to order needed materials much faster than before. For example, mailing list information and forms for ATSDR's *Case Studies in Environmental Medicine* (document number 820010) and the *Hazardous Substances and Public Health* newsletter (document number 820015) are available through the system. A caller can obtain order forms, fill them out, and return them by fax.

Documents with their reference numbers are grouped together in directories according to topic. The major directories available and their document numbers are listed in the box.

Up to five documents can be ordered per phone call. Once a document has been ordered, the system informs the caller how long it will take to receive the information.

CDC Fax Information Service Major Directories

000002 **Childhood Immunizations** - For example, measles, mumps, rubella

000003 **Infection Control** - Topics such as sterilization, disinfection, waste

000004 **Disease Directory** - For example, influenza, hepatitis, TB, HIV/AIDS

000005 **Int'l Travelers Health Req. -** Immunization recommendations and requirements for travelers

000006 **NIOSH Information** - Occupational safety and health information

000007 **Biosafety Information** - Packaging/shipping biological materials

000008 **Smoking and Health Information** - Tobacco use facts

000010 **Injury Prevention and Control** - Violence, suicide, unintentional injuries

000011 **ATSDR** - Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry information

Information specifically for health care providers

000102 **Immunization Information** - Health care workers information

000103 **ACIP Immunization Recommendations** - Immunization reference documents

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

EPA Proposes Changes to PCB Regulations

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) EXIT announced in November aproposed rule to make federal regulations for polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) less costly and burdensome, while still protecting public health and the environment. The changes to the PCB regulations are the first since 1978 and would reduce costs to industry by more than $6 billion a year.

PCBs are a mixture of chemicals that are clear to yellow oily liquids or solids. Although PCBs have not been manufactured in the United States since 1977, they are still present in the environment. The chemicals were used

as insulating material in electrical transformers and capacitors, in hydraulic and heat transfer fluids, and in many other heat and fire sensitive applications. Animal experiments have shown that some PCB mixtures produce adverse health effects that include liver damage, skin irritations, reproductive and developmental effects, and cancer.

EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner said, "These proposed changes the first in 16 years are a common-sense approach for dealing with PCB wastes. Our goal is to continue strong public health and environmental protection, while reducing duplication and paperwork at the federal and state levels and saving the regulated community billion of dollars."

The proposed rule would make PCB regulations more flexible in selecting disposal technologies for PCB wastes and would expand the allowable decontamination procedures. Obtaining EPA approval for a variety of activities would become less burdensome, and ambiguous parts of the regulations would be clarified. Other changes concern the use and maintenance distribution in commerce and disposal of PCB equipment, and the notification and labeling of PCB wastes and changes in the operation of commercial storage facilities.

Since 1978, EPA has promulgated numerous rules addressing all aspects of the life cycle of PCBs. For additional information or to receive a fact sheet about the proposed rule to amend PCB regulations, call EPA's waste hotline at (800) 424-9346.

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New Survey Underscores Students' Concern About the Environment, the Importance of Environmental Education

Graph: Percentage of Students Who Actively Take Steps To Help Improve the Environment

Fifty percent of all American schoolchildren say that harm to the environment is a problem they want to help make better, ranking it second only to the AIDS epidemic as a priority for action, according to two new national surveys released by the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) EXIT and the National Environmental Education and Training Foundation (NEETF).

Officials for EPA and NEETF said that the surveys underscored the importance of school-based environmental education, and would assist them in shaping environmental education materials and programs to better meet children's needs. Particular priorities for environmental education include disadvantaged students and students in higher grades, who reported lower levels of environmental knowledge and action.

"Disadvantaged students and those in higher grades reported lower levels of environmental knowledge and action."

The polls surveyed 982 middle class students in grades 4 to 12 in schools nationwide, as well as 2,139 students in the same age group who live in disadvantaged communities, where 30% or more of the population falls below the poverty line. The surveys were commissioned by NEETF with funding from the EPA, and conducted by Roper Starch Worldwide.

"The schoolchildren of this country care deeply about our environment, and they are ready and willing to help protect it," said EPA Administrator Carol M. Browner. "These surveys will help all of us do a better job of developing environmental education materials and programs that meet children's needs."

The surveys showed the following:

- Schoolchildren in grades 4 and 5 say they learn more about the environment than students in higher grades, and are more likely than their high school counterparts to feel that environmental problems affect them every day;
- Girls report higher levels of knowledge and concern for environmental issues than boys;
- Students report that they actively take steps to help protect the environment, such as turning off lights to save energy (78%), recycling (69%), and saving water (67%);
- More disadvantaged students identified shortages of good drinking water, lead poisoning, and pollution from toxic waste as issues of greater concern to them, compared with all students surveyed;
- Older students are more likely to prefer television and newspapers as sources of environmental information, while family, mmuseums, and zoos are more important in younger students; and
- Disadvantaged students overwhelmingly (73%) cite science class as their primary source of learning about the environment.

For a complete copy of the two surveys, contact NEETF at 915 Fifteenth Street, NW, Suite 200, Washington, DC 20005, or call (202) 628-8200.

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More Diverse Sites Added to Superfund National Priorities List

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) EXIT has broadened its list of sites added to the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). This final rule includes three wood preserving sites, two environmental justice sites, one pesticide site, four federal facility sites, and two Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) sites.

One of the added RCRA sites, which are not normally included on the NPL, is Aqua-Tech Environmental Inc. (Groce Laboratories) in Spartanburg County, South Carolina. Aqua-Tech operated a RCRA treatment, storage, and disposal facility (TSDF) under interim status until its RCRA Part B permit application was denied and it was forced to close. The loss of authorization to operate qualifies this site for listing on the NPL. The second RCRA site is Onondaga Lake in Syracuse, New York. Onondaga Lake, a RCRA subtitled C regulated facility, qualifies for NPL listing because of bankruptcy.

The three wood-preserving sites included in this rule are Koppers Co. Inc. (Charleston Plant) in Charleston, South Carolina; AT&SF (Albuquerque) in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Escambia Wood Pensacola in Escambia County, Florida.

In addition to being a wood preserving site, Escambia Wood is also considered an environmental justice site because of the nearby low-income population. The orginal boundaries of the second environmental justice site, Agriculture Street Landfill in New Orleans, Louisiana, contain low-income minority housing. EPA and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry are working with the communities at both sites to address their concerns.

The pesticide site is Del Monte Corp. (Oahu Plantation) in Honolulu County, Hawaii. Del Monte qualifies for NPL listing because of contamination caused by leaks, spills, and improper disposal of pesticides.

The four federal facility sites included in this rule are Concord Naval Weapons Station in Concord, California; Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station in Havelock, North Carolina; Parris Island Marine Corps Recruit Depot

in Parris Island, South Carolina; and Fort Eustis in Newport News, Virginia.

The primary purpose of the NPL, which is updated at least annually, is to guide EPA in determining which sites warrant further investigation. For further information, contact the Superfund hotline at (800) 424-9608.

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Environmental Stewardship of Pesticides Use Is Focus of Partnership Formed by EPA, USDA, and FDA With Pesticide User Groups and Firms

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), EXIT the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have formed a partnership with a number of groups and companies representing agricultural and nonagricultural pesticide users to promote environmental stewardship in pesticide use in the United States.

The partnership is the first under the commitment made by the three agencies before the US House of Representatives to work jointly with pesticide user groups to reach the Administration's goal of reducing the use and risks of pesticides in the United States. Voluntary pollution prevention has been a cornerstone of our efforts to protect human health and the environment, and this new pesticide partnership is an important step toward that goal," said Carol M. Browner, EPA administrator. I congratulate the companies and grower groups that are joining with us for their forward-thinking approach to environmentally sound pesticide use practices and look forward to seeing others follow their lead."

The groups and companies that have joined the partnership include the National Potato Council; American Corn Growers Association; the International Apple Institute; the California Citrus Research Board; the California Pear Growers and California Pear Advisory Board; Appalachian Power; Atlantic Electric; Carolina Power and Light; Columbus Southern Power; Delmarva Power; Duke power; New York State Electric and Gas; Ohio Power; Pennsylvania Electric; Pennsylvania Power and Light; Pennsylvania Rural Electric Association; Virginia, Maryland, Delaware Association of Electric Cooperatives; Wheeling Power; and Wisconsin Public Service Corporation.

The federal government agencies and other participants agreed that environmental stewardship is an integral part of pest management practices. Specifically, the partnership had agreed to commit to a number of guiding principles that will shape pest management practices. The partners agreed to reduce risk to humans and the environment and to minimize pesticide use. The federal government will promote the adoption of alternative pest management technologies and practices. For additional information, call EPA's waste hotline at (800) 424-9346.

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International Congress on Hazardous Waste:

Impact on Human and Ecological Health

June 5-8, 1995

Marriott Marquis Hotel

Atlanta, Georgia

The purpose of the International Congress on Hazardous Waste: Impact on Human and Ecological Health is to exchange findings, ideas, and recommendations related to the health and ecological effects of hazardous waste.

The Congress will provide an opportunity for internationally recognized scientific experts from various technical disciplines (biomedical and environmental scientists, epidemiologists, physicians, risk assessors, toxicologists, economists, attorneys, and ecologists) to evaluate and disseminate state-of-the-art information concerning the ecological and health effects of hazardous waste.

The intended audience is health scientists, epidemiologists, toxicologists, and ecologists from both government and academia; clinical and public health physicians working in environmental and occupational health; health educators; public health administrators and policy makers; industrial health, safety, and management personnel; and professional environmentalists.

For further information contact:

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Medichem Announces 1995 Annual Congress

Medichem announces its annual congress will be held September 18-22, 1995, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Medichem is an international professional association of more than 500 occupational health professionals, including physicians, nurses, toxicologists, epidemiologist, industrial hygienists, and safety engineers from 47 countries. Founded in 1972, it serves as the Scientific Advisory Committee of the International Commission on Occupational Health (founded in 1903). Medichem's primary focus is occupational and environmental health in the chemical industry. Each year, it holds a Congress from which selected proceedings are published by the World Health Organization. The Congress was last held in the United States in 1977.

Major topics include: risk assessment, risk communication, regulatory toxicology, harmonization of global standards, products stewardship, clinical update on occupational illness, update on the role of biomarkers, and emerging environmental issues.

For more information contact Allison P. Cocuzzo at (617) 258-5652 or write to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Medical Department, 77 Massachusetts Avenue, 20B-238, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139-4307.

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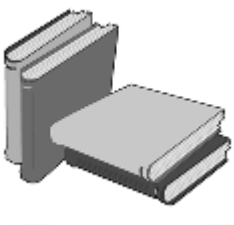

COURSES

Harvard Short Courses

The Harvard School of Public Health is offering the following short courses in the area of environmental radiation and environmental management:

Management and Disposal of Radioactive Wastes, June 12-16, 1995. This course emphasizes low-level radioactive waste. Topics include sources and classifications of wastes; applicable standards and regulation; treatment techniques such as segregation, compaction, incineration, and related disposal options; these topics are supplemented by coverage of relevant radiation fundamentals. The course is led by Keith Dinger the author of *Environmental Health*, the industry's most comprehensive source book. Cost: $1,145.

For more information about these and other available courses, contact Kathryn Lord, Harvard School of Public Health, 677 Huntington Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts 02115; telephone (617) 432-1171; fax (617) 432-1969.

University of Cincinnati Medical Center

Supported by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the Education Resource Center at the University of Cincinnati is offering the following training opportunities:

Review (Course Number: 354-045-1), April 19-21, 1995. This course is designed specifically to review the topics covered in the National Registry of Environmental Professionals (NREP) examination. Course director is Mary Malotke, IHIT; 2.1 CEUs are available. Cost: $495.

Air Sampling for Toxic Substances (Course Number: 148-045-1), April 26- 28, 1995. This 3-day course relies heavily on hands-on training. Trainees will be able to apply their training in air sampling methods immediately upon returning to their jobs. Course director is Mary Fox, MS; 2.8 CEUs and 3 ABIH CM points available. Cost: $525.

For more information about these and other available courses, contact Sharon Johnson at (513) 558-1731.

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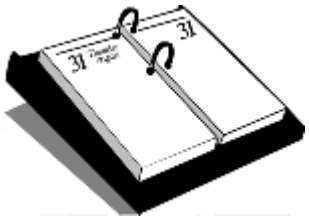

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

April

April 25-26, 1995: Third Annual Enviro-ProExpo Conference and Exhibition and Munich Fair's Tecomex Exhibition**,** Mexico City, Mexico. *Contact*: E.J. Krause & Associates, 7315 Wisconsin Avenue, Suite 450N, Bethesda, Maryland 20814; telephone (301) 986-7800; fax (301) 986-4538.

April 28-30, 1995: 1995 State-of-the-Art Pediatrics**,** New York City, New York. *Contact:* The American Academy of Pediatrics, 141 Northwest Point Boulevard, PO Box 927, Elk Grove Village, Illinois 60009-0927;

telephone (708) 981-4321; fax (708) 228-5059.

***April 28-May 5, 1995: The American Occupational Health Conference*,** Las Vegas, Nevada. *Contact*: American College of Occupational Medicine, 55 West Seegers Road, Arlington Heights, Illinois 60005; telephone (708) 228- 6850; fax (708) 228-1856.

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May

***May 5-10, 1995: Medical Library Association 95th Annual Meeting*,** Washington, DC. *Contact*: Medical Library Association Inc., Suite 300, Six North Michigan Avenue. Chicago, Illinois 60602; telephone (312) 419-9094; fax (312) 419-8950.

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June

***June 5-8, 1995: International Congress on Hazardous Waste: Impact on Human and Ecological Health*,** Atlanta, Georgia. *Contact*: Dr. Howard Frumkin, Emory University School of Public Health, Division of Environmental and Occupational Health, 1599 Clifton Road, NE, Atlanta, Georgia 30329; telephone (404) 727-3697; fax (404) 727-8744.

***June 10-15, 1995: Special Libraries Association 86th Annual Conference*,** Montreal, Quebec, Canada. *Contact*: SLA, 1700 18th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20009; telephone (202) 234-4700.

***June 26-28, 1995: Risk Assessment of Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons in the Environment*,** San Francisco, California. *Contact*: Alex Taylor, JACA Corporation, 550 Pinetown Road, Fort Washington, Pennsylvania 19034; telephone (215) 643-5466; fax (215) 643-2772.

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Link for Reader Feedback:

The newsletter's guestbook and feedback form is still under construction, but meanwhile, you can send us a message via this link telling us who you are, to request additional information about newsletter articles, or to send comments.

[**Hazardous Substances & Public Health Homepage**]

This page last updated on October 24, 2003
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