

Update for Stephen Foster Neighborhood

January 2011

Koppers Hazardous Waste Site, Gainesville, Florida

Additional Offsite Soil Tests

About the Health Agencies

The main office of the Florida Department of Health (DOH), the DOH Alachua County Health Department (ACHD), and the US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) work jointly to serve the public. We are quick to respond with public health actions when needed. We provide trusted health knowledge about toxic chemicals at hazardous waste sites. If we find a health threat is occurring or is likely to happen, we make sure people who live nearby know about it right away.

About the Koppers Site

The Koppers hazardous waste site is near the intersection of North 23rd Avenue and North Main Street in Gainesville. Since 1916, Koppers site owners treated utility poles and timber with chemicals to prevent decay. Past waste disposal caused soil and ground water contamination.

In 1984, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) added the Cabot-Koppers site to their Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). Recently, they discovered soil contamination west of the site. Since 1989, Florida DOH reviewed environmental data, found the site a potential health risk, and recommended warning signs, further testing, and restricted site access.

Residents west of Koppers in the Stephen Foster neighborhood are concerned about contact with chemicals in the soil and contaminated dust in their homes. They also want to know if chemicals in sediments of creeks that drain the site might harm health.

On May 15, 2009, the Alachua CHD notified Stephen Foster neighborhood residents near the border with Koppers not to let their children play in the City easement next to the site. In June 2009, the Florida DOH and the Alachua CHD sponsored an open house for residents to learn more about the Stephen Foster neighborhood soil tests. In August 2009, the Florida DOH and ATSDR released the first health report reviewing the soil tests.

A second report on soil sampling along roads in the neighborhood was released in June 2010. These test results did not affect the current Health Department Advisory. Also in June 2010, the Florida DOH and ATSDR released a health report reviewing Springstead/Hogtown creek sediments. In October 2010, staff from the Florida DOH and the ACHD, participated in an open house with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), and the US EPA.

Based on recent soil tests in Stephen Foster residential yards and recent soil tests to the north, east and south of the Koppers site, Florida DOH concludes:

Contact with the tested surface soil may cause a very low increased risk of all cancers.

Contact with the tested surface soil is unlikely to cause non-cancer illness.

Recent Florida DOH Findings about Off-site Soil

- Florida DOH does not expect incidental ingestion (swallowing) of very small amounts of dioxin in surface soil tested in Stephen Foster yards between NW 26 Avenue and NW 32 Avenue and other areas tested to the north and east and along NW 23 Avenue, to harm people's health based on September 2010 tests. We do not expect the highest amount of dioxin people are likely to take in to cause non-cancer illness. There is, however, a "very low" increased risk of cancer.
- Florida DOH also concludes the party in charge of cleanup (Beazer East, Inc) needs to keep testing surface soil to find out how much the Koppers site has polluted Stephen Foster and area soil. More testing will also show how far chemicals from the site have impacted the area.

Recommendations

- The Health Department continues to recommend people living near the site practice good general hygiene. This includes hand washing with soap and water after contacting bare soil in areas within Stephen Foster between NW 26 Avenue and NW 32 Avenue west of the Koppers site.

Recent Florida DOH Advice for the Stephen Foster Neighborhood

- Beazer East should keep testing Stephen Foster neighborhood surface soil for dioxins.
- Beazer East should clean up polluted surface soil in the Stephen Foster neighborhood.
- Beazer East should look into the presence of polluted dust in nearby buildings. If found, it should be cleaned up.

Recent Florida DOH Findings about Koppers On-Site Soil

- Beazer East should routinely water the site to prevent dust.
- Beazer East should perform a risk assessment for future commercial and residential use of the site.

Recent Florida DOH Findings about Springstead/Hogtown Creek Sediments

- Contamination in creek sediments is above state cleanup target levels.
- The responsible parties should remove polluted creek sediments.

Future Health Activities

- Florida DOH will release another health report on recent offsite surface soil tests.
- Florida DOH epidemiologists are reviewing cancer records for the Stephen Foster area. A report is expected this spring.
- Florida DOH will continue to review additional data around the Koppers site.

All ATSDR/Florida DOH reports are available at:
www.myfloridaeh.com/medicine/superfund/pha.htm
(Scroll down to Cabot Carbon/Koppers to see the report)
Or call toll-free 877-798-2772 to request a copy

For More Information

About health:

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About cleanup of the site:

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