

Update for Stephen Foster Neighborhood

June 2012

Koppers Hazardous Waste Site

Florida DOH Releases Second Report on Cancer Data (2001-2008) and EPA Tests Dust in 30 homes for Dioxins

About the Health Agencies

The central 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 protect the public's health. We give people facts from scientific studies on toxic chemicals to help them learn how to stay safe. If we find a health threat, we make sure people who live nearby know about it right away.

About the Koppers Site

The Koppers hazardous waste site is in Gainesville, near where Northwest 23rd Avenue and North Main Street meet. Since 1916, Koppers site owners used chemicals to treat wood to stop decay. Past waste disposal caused chemicals to get into the soil and groundwater.

In 1984, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) added the Cabot-Koppers site to the National Priorities List (NPL). Since 1989, Florida DOH and ATSDR have:

- Reviewed environmental data
- Found the site is a likely health risk
- Advised the responsible party to post warning signs
- Asked EPA to do more testing on and offsite
- Advised people to keep off the site
- Advised parents to keep children off the city easements west of the site where chemical levels are high in the soil

People living west of Koppers in the Stephen Foster neighborhood worry that chemicals from the site in the soil, indoor dust in their homes, or in creek sediments might affect their health.

Findings in Second Report : Cancer Data 2001-2008

Review of the time periods 2001-2005, 2006-2008 and 1981-2008 generally did not reveal elevations in cancers of concern most likely to be associated with chronic exposure to contamination. In summary, although a few elevations in specific cancers were observed; no overall pattern of an increase in cancer rates, nor a pattern of increases in specific cancers were noted. It is not possible to attribute any of the recent or small increases in cancer rates to residence and exposure in the Stephen Foster neighborhood given that there was no overall pattern of increase throughout the period of observation, and no consistent findings. The complete report, including details for specific cancers, is available as described on the back of this page.

EPA Tests Dust in 30 Homes

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has collected dust samples from inside 16 Stephen Foster neighborhood homes near the Koppers site to test for dioxins. They also collected dust samples from 14 homes distant from the site for comparison. A report on the health risk is expected this fall.

Overall Alachua CHD Advice

The Alachua CHD recommends:

- Area residents wash hands with soap and water after contact with bare soil.

- Parents should keep their children from playing in the City easement next to the site.
- Residents should avoid prolonged exposure to dust from mowing.
- Chickens used for homegrown eggs be kept in coops or cages to minimize the risk of ingestion to contaminated soils and potentially concentrate contaminants in eggs. (The City of Gainesville only allows a property to contain two chickens.)

Recent Florida DOH Advice for the Stephen Foster Neighborhood

The responsible party should:

- Continue to test for dioxins in Stephen Foster neighborhood surface soil.
- Clean up contaminated surface soil in the Stephen Foster neighborhood.
- Clean up contaminated creek sediments in the Springstead and Hogtown Creeks.

Future Health Activities

Florida DOH will:

- Review the results of indoor dust of nearby homes.
- Review the results of additional offsite surface soil tests.
- Keep nearby residents up-to-date on any new findings.

For More Details

About health or any of the DOH reports:

- Randy Merchant, Florida Department of Health: 877-798-2772 (randy_merchant@doh.state.fl.us)
- Anthony Dennis, Alachua County Health Department: 352-334-7930 (anthony_dennis@doh.state.fl.us)

About cleanup of the site or dust testing:

- Scott Miller, US Environmental Protection Agency: 404-562-9120 (miller.scott@epamail.epa.gov)

***See all nine of the Koppers health reports online at:
www.myfloridaeh.com/medicine/superfund/pha.htm
 Or to get hard copies, call us toll-free at 877-798-2772
 Or email us at HSEM@doh.state.fl.us
 Or get them online at the ACHD website at: www.doh.state.fl.us/chdalachua/***

