

Neighborhood Update

December 2013

Koppers Hazardous Waste Site



Florida Department of Health Finalizes Neighborhood Soil Report OKs Eating Homegrown Zucchini

The Florida Department of Health (DOH) works to protect health. The U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) funds us to help people who live near hazardous waste sites learn how to stay safe. If we find a health threat, we let those who live near a site know about it right away.

The agencies have now finished a health report on the January 2012 test results of soil just west of the Koppers site. As with three previous reports, we again find incidental ingestion (swallowing) of very small amounts of surface soil is not likely to harm children or adults. We also find that, although there has been no testing of homegrown produce, it does not appear that eating them is a public health threat. All the Koppers health reports are online at www.floridahealth.gov/healthy-environments/hazardous-waste-sites/health-assessments.htm.

Between September 13 and December 14, 2012, Florida DOH received public comments on our draft health report of the January 2012 soil test results. We received comments from nearby residents, a consultant for the site owner, and a consultant for some residents. In August 2013, Florida DOH issued an update that urged nearby residents to limit eating zucchini grown in soil with more than 23 parts per trillion (ppt) dioxins. DOH-Alachua passed out the update. DOH-Alachua also mailed letters with the update to 7 property owners with more than 23 ppt dioxins and to 27 adjacent property owners.

Florida DOH is revising the concern expressed in the August 2013 Neighborhood Update with regards to homegrown zucchini. Originally Florida DOH relied on a 1994 study of zucchini grown in soil with dioxin. This study, however, freeze-dried the zucchini which greatly increased the dioxin levels. Once Florida DOH took this into account, they determined that eating zucchini grown in soil near the site is not likely to cause illness.

Accidentally swallowing very small amounts of surface soil in yards near the Koppers site is not likely to cause harm.

Eating homegrown zucchini or other homegrown produce does not appear to be a public health threat.

Ongoing Advice Related to the Site

Florida DOH still suggests that people living near the site should:

1. Keep children from playing in the north-south city easement next to the site between NW 26th and 29th Avenues.
2. Mow lawns only when it is not dry and dusty.

Also, the responsible party should clean up dioxins from surface soil around nearby homes.

Future Health Plans

Florida DOH will:

- Let people know when a report on testing of indoor dust of nearby homes for dioxins is final.
- Review the results of June and October 2012 off-site soil tests.
- Solicit public comment on a draft report on the potential health threat from vapor intrusion into buildings over the former Cabot Carbon portion of the site.
- Keep people up-to-date on any new findings.

More about the Koppers Site

The site is at 200 N.W. 23rd Avenue west of North Main Street. From 1916 to 2009, the site owners treated wood to stop rot. Over the years, waste leaked into soil and groundwater. In 1984, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) added the site to the National Priorities List (NPL). People who live west of the site have health concerns.

Since 1989, the Florida DOH and ATSDR have:

- Advised the posting of warning signs where needed.
- Asked EPA to do more testing on- and off-site.
- Found the site is a likely health risk.
- Reviewed tests of soil, groundwater, and creek beds.
- Warned people to keep off the site.
- Written 10 reports in response to health concerns.

For More Details

About health or any Florida DOH health report about Koppers:

- Randy Merchant: 1-877-798-2772 (Randy.Merchant@FLHealth.gov)
- Anthony Dennis: 352-334-7930 (Anthony.Dennis@FLHealth.gov)

About cleanup of the site or dust testing:

- Rusty Kestle, U.S. EPA: 404-562-8819 (Kestle.Rusty@epa.gov)

See all the reports written concerning the Koppers site!

They are posted online:

www.floridahealth.gov/healthy-environments/hazardous-waste-sites/health-assessments.html

Or: www.doh.state.fl.us/chdalachua/

Or you may request a copy one of two other ways:

By phone: toll-free 877-798-2772

Or by e-mail: phtoxicology@FLHealth.gov

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