

Gale's Addition Housing Development Dioxin Results

The Housing Authority of Clallam County (HACC) tested for soil dioxins at their Gale's Addition housing development at North Gales and E. 7th Avenue because of community health concerns. The five-acre property will have nine affordable homes and two larger housing units built on it.

This document discusses the results of the soil sampling and answers some common questions about dioxins. See page two for information about Ecology's upcoming dioxin study in Port Angeles.

Q: What was found at Gale's Addition?

A: Eight soil samples were taken from the five acre property and analyzed for 17 kinds of dioxins. Samples included both surface soils and 12-18 inch depths. The laboratory then calculated the total dioxin concentrations, accounting for their overall toxicity.

Only **one of the eight samples** was slightly above the residential soil cleanup standard for of 11.1 parts per trillion (ppt) dioxin. **Levels of chemicals below the soil cleanup standard are not expected to cause adverse health effects.**

Q: What happens next?

A: HACC is taking two to three more samples from the area where the 12.01 ppt sample was found. This area was recently dug up to install utilities. This type of disturbance can lower the concentration of surface pollution (like dioxins).

If the new samples still show dioxins above the state standard of 11.1, the Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) will work with HACC to address the pollution. When contaminant levels are less than the residential cleanup standard, Ecology considers the property to be suitable for development.

For questions about this housing development, please contact HACC (see the box to the right for contact information).

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS FAQ?

Dioxin sampling results
Dioxin information
What Ecology is doing

MORE INFORMATION

Housing Authority of Clallam County (HACC)
Kay Kassinger
360-452-7631 ext. 41
kkassinger@hacc-housing.org

Clallam County Department of Health and Human Services
Andy Brastad
360-417-2415
abrastad@co.clallam.wa.us

Dioxin FAQ from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)
<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/tfacts104.html>

Ecology contact information:

Marian Abbett, P.E.
Toxics Cleanup Program
Southwest Regional Office
(360) 407-6257
mabb461@ecy.wa.gov

Special accommodations:

If you need this publication in an alternative format, call 360-407-6300. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

Q: What are dioxins?

A: Dioxins are a family of toxic chemicals that have similar chemical structures and similar biological effects. They are persistent (do not break down easily in the environment) and accumulate in the fatty tissues of animals and humans.

Q: Where do dioxins come from?

A: Dioxins are unintentional byproducts of human activities and natural processes. They can be formed during combustion (burning) and waste incineration. This includes home wood stoves, fireplaces, and burn barrels. Dioxins can also be formed during industrial processes, such as pulp and paper chlorine bleaching, and certain types of chemical manufacturing.

Q: How can people be exposed to dioxins?

A: More than 90% of the general population's exposure to dioxins is from food, primarily meat, dairy products, and fish. You can also be exposed by breathing low levels in air, drinking low levels in water, and ingesting soil. Some herbicides and pesticides contain dioxins and can be absorbed through the skin. Workers at paper and pulp mills and waste incinerators can be exposed.

Low levels of dioxins are present almost everywhere in our environment. Levels tend to be higher in urban areas because of the density of motor vehicles, industry, incinerators, and homes using wood stoves, fireplaces, and burn barrels.

Q: What are the health concerns with dioxins?

A: Exposure to dioxins increases the risk of certain cancers in humans. Dioxins have been associated with reproductive problems in animal studies, and may pose a similar risk to humans. Very large doses can cause skin problems or rashes. The health effects of low doses, however, are still being studied.

Q: What is Ecology doing about dioxins in the Port Angeles area?

A: Ecology plans to sample soils in Port Angeles for dioxin pollution during the summer of 2008. The information from this sampling study will help to determine what further actions the agency needs to take.

Q: Will my property be sampled?

A: Ecology does not know where samples will be taken yet. This spring, you will have the chance to review and provide comments on a Sampling and Analysis Plan. This plan will describe the methods used to pick sampling locations. You will be contacted by Ecology if access to your property is needed.