ATSDR

Region 5 RRT Spring Meeting

Springfield, IL

April 30, 2026

ATSDR Region 5 Role in Emergency Response

Motria Caudill, PhD
ATSDR Region 5
Director

What is ATSDR?

- In 1980, Congress created ATSDR to implement the health-related sections of laws that protect the public from hazardous wastes and environmental spills of hazardous substances (CERCLA).
- ATSDR assesses current and emerging environmental health threats and provides actionable recommendations to protect health at hazardous waste sites and in response to environmental public health emergencies.

Source: https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/about/index.html

Our core work:
Public Health Assessments (PHAs) and Health Consultations (HCs):

For every site that is on or is proposed for the National Priorities List, CERCLA requires that ATSDR evaluate:

- Whether people might be exposed to contamination and potential "exposure pathways": breathing, eating, or skin contact with contaminated air or soils.
- What level of a toxic substance might cause harm to people.
- Whether working or living near a hazardous waste site might affect people's health.

Source:https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/PHA/Product.aspx

10 most recently published documents

Site Name	Type	Location	Date
Delano PCE Plume Site [6388 KB] Factsheet [628 KB] Exposiciones al aire interior en edificaciones próximas al sitio de la pluma de PCE de Delano [5892 KB] [En Español] Factsheet [693 KB] [En Español]	HC	Delano, CA	01/22/2026
PCE Former Dry Cleaner Site [1552 KB] Factsheet [584 KB]	PHA	Atlantic, IA	01/21/2026
Sterigenics Sterilization Plant [2233 KB] Factsheet [367 KB]	PHA	Marietta, GA	01/20/2026
Centredale Manor Restoration [1991 KB]	HC	North Providence, RI	01/14/2026
Bristol Quarry Landfill [1836 KB] Factsheet [561 KB]	HC	Bristol, VA	12/22/2025
Calle Chavez Groundwater Plume [1685 KB]	HC	Española, NM	09/25/2025
Former Macon Naval Ordnance Plant [1208 KB]	HC	Macon, GA	08/29/2025
Matteo and Sons, Inc Superfund Site [1573 KB]	HC	West Deptford, NJ	08/29/2025
Perchloroethylene (PCE) Southeast Contamination Site [3755 KB]	PHA	York, NE	08/26/2025
Jard Company, Inc [2018 KB]	PHA	Bennington, VT	07/22/2025

Emergency Response (ER)

- ATSDR Emergency Response Teams are available 24 hours a day. They are comprised of toxicologists, physicians, and other scientists available to assist during an emergency involving hazardous substances in the environment.
- CDC's Emergency Operations Center at (770) 488-7100
- Ask for ATSDR Duty Officer

Source: https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/emergency-response/resources/index.html

ATSDR's public health partners in ER

For a significant ER event with community exposures, ATSDR (Region & Headquarters) bring together a team of public health experts to advise EPA and the public:

- Tribal, State, County, and City Health Departments
- America's Poison Centers (PCs)
  - PCs provide expert advice and maintain the National Poison Data System® (NPDS), the nation's only near real-time poisoning data surveillance system
  - ATSDR R5 is in contact directly with the state PCs in our region
- Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units (PEHSU)
  - Network of clinicians who offer consultations on environmental exposures and referrals for evaluation and necessary services for pediatric patients and expectant parents
  - ATSDR R5 collaborates with the PEHSU in Chicago and their partners

How ATSDR works with health partners in ER events

We *notify* them so they are prepared for public inquiries, e.g.:

- Landfill fire, Rice County, MN, May 2023; for awareness of smoke & odors

We may *ask them for technical guidance*, e.g.:

- Anhydrous ammonia tanker crash, Teutopolis, IL, October 2023: ATSDR & IDPH consulted with PC on decontamination methods for residences

We may *refer children and expectant parents with specific medical concerns to PEHSUs, especially in events with mercury poisoning.*

A truck crash in Illinois kills 5 and forces temporary evacuation over ammonia leak

UPDATED OCTOBER 1, 2023 · 9:33 PM ET

By The Associated Press

Emergency responders work the scene of semitruck crash in Teutopolis, Ill., on Saturday.
NewsNation-WTWO via AP

https://www.npr.org/2023/09/30/1202851799/a-semitruck-crash-in-central-illinois-has-caused-a-deadly-ammonia-leak

How ATSDR works with PCs

We *ask PCs about calls from the public & hospital admissions*, e.g.:

- Styrene tank leak, Cleves, OH in September 2024. PC reported on how many calls they received, reported symptoms, and how many people presented to an emergency department (ED)
- Industrial fire with potential cyanide release, RCO facility (photo), Roseville, MI, April 2025. *The PC put out a notification to local clinicians.* They did not receive calls from the public, but were advised of a person with no direct exposure who presented to ED with symptoms

https://www.cbsnews.com/detroit/news/probe-of-fire-at-industrial-plant-in-roseville-underway/

ATSDR's medical management guidelines (MMGs) used by health partners

- MMGs are developed by ATSDR to aid ED physicians and other emergency healthcare professionals who manage acute exposures resulting from chemical incidents.
- MMGs are intended to aid healthcare professionals to effectively decontaminate patients, protect themselves and others from contamination, communicate with other involved personnel, efficiently transport patients to a medical facility, and provide competent medical evaluation and treatment to exposed persons.

Medical Management Guidelines for Ammonia

(NH_3)

CAS# 7664-41-7
UN# 2672 (between 12% and 44% solution), 2073 (>44% solution), 1005 (anhydrous gas or >50% solution)

PDF Version [183 KB]

Health Effects

- Ammonia is highly irritating to the eyes and respiratory tract. Swelling and narrowing of the throat and bronchi, coughing, and an accumulation of fluid in the lungs can occur.
- Ammonia causes rapid onset of a burning sensation in the eyes, nose, and throat, accompanied by lacrimation, rhinorrhea, and coughing. Upper airway swelling and pulmonary edema may lead to airway obstruction.

https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/MMG/MMGDetails.aspx?mmgid=7&toxid=2

ATSDR Minimal Risk Levels (MRLs)

EXPLORE THIS TOPIC

Minimal Risk Levels

For Everyone
NOVEMBER 12, 2024

HIGHLIGHTS

- Minimal Risk Levels (MRLs) are a prediction of how much someone can be exposed to a chemical without detectable health risks.
- Exposure to a chemical above the MRL values does not mean a person will have health problems.
- Sometimes, the data on human health effects is incomplete. That affects the MRL values.

ATSDR/partner support to EPA and the public

- Asphalt release at Chicago Sanitary & Ship Canal, Forest View, IL, May 2025: ATSDR worked with IDPH to provide comments on EPA air monitoring plan, including methods & minimal risk levels (MRLs)
- Industrial air release in Mason County, WV, near Gallia County, Ohio, August 2025: ATSDR R5 & R3 provided MRLs for dimethylphenols and support on messaging to the public about odors

https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/minimal-risk-levels/about/index.html

Public health support on My Way Trading plastics fire

- Warehouse fire, Richmond, IN, April 2023
- ATSDR provided EPA with MRLs for air contaminants
- PC offered technical support to local clinicians
- ATSDR, PC, and Wayne County health department gave input to City of Richmond on public FAQs about the event, health concerns, and clean-up

Warehouse Fire Information

April 14, 2023

WAREHOUSE FIRE INFORMATION

If you need assistance

Anyone needing assistance during this tie should call the Wayne County Community Help Line at (765) 973-9300. This includes transportation away from the affected area, information about shelter, and health concerns.

https://www.richmondindiana.gov/news/warehouse-fire-information

OHIO POISON CENTERS

Regional Poison Control Clinical Guidance Document

Nitric Acid Release in McArthur, Ohio

Background: Around 8:30am on June 11, 2025, a gas leak occurred in a tank containing nitric acid at the Austin Powder Co. manufacturing plant in McArthur, Ohio. Ohio Poison Centers are working together with local, state and federal agencies to provide advice regarding decontamination, treatment, and prevention of exposure to toxins released during the incident. This document contains guidance for the public about the potential health impact of this chemical release.

Agents: Nitric acid. Inhalation of nitric acid can also involve exposure to nitrogen oxides, such as nitrogen dioxide and nitric oxide, which are produced when nitric acid comes into contact with light, wood, and metals.

Symptoms: Serious or long-term health effects are not expected. Many early symptoms are related to stress reactions related to being involved in, or close to, an environmental disaster. Eye, skin, nose, lung, and/or throat irritation can occur. Chemical exposures can cause flare ups of preexisting respiratory diseases such as allergies, asthma, or emphysema. Initial symptoms of chemical exposure may include irritation of the eyes, ears, nose, throat, and skin; nausea; dizziness; headache; fatigue; shortness of breath; cough; or wheezing.

Management: Impacted residents should follow evacuation orders if and when enacted. Anyone experiencing symptoms that they are concerned about may be linked to the incident should call the regional Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. This hotline is staffed 24/7 by nurses, pharmacists, and physicians. All calls are confidential and free of charge.

Testing Considerations

Clinicians have been advised to use their best clinical judgment and consultation with toxicology experts for additional testing and patient management advice. Biomarkers of exposure, such as blood or urine tests, are not likely to be useful to clinicians providing patient care.

Additional event-specific resources are available for consultation:

- **Poison Help Line (Ohio Poison Centers):** 1-800-222-1222
- **Public Health**
  - Vinton Health Department: 740-596-5233
  - Ohio Department of Health: 614-644-7638
- **Centers for Disease Control:** 1-770-488-7100
- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Hotline:** 1-866-361-0526 (8a-8p)
  - For questions about environmental impact and clean up.
- **Division of Animal Health, Ohio Department of Agriculture:** 1-614-728-6220
  - For questions about animal health.

Updates to this document will be made as more information becomes available. [Version 2 – 6.11.2025].

POISON HELP 1-800-222-1222

Public health support on McArthur, OH, nitric acid release

- Nitric acid release, June 2025
- ATSDR, Ohio PC, and Ohio Department of Health worked together to provide critical information for residents and clinicians about a potential nitric acid health effects
- The PC published event-specific fact sheets for the public and for clinicians

Questions?

Dr. Motria Caudill cell 312-257-4853 or LDU1@cdc.gov.

For more information, contact CDC/ATSDR
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 https://www.cdc.gov/ | https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/
Follow us on Twitter **@CDCEnvironment**

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the U. S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention or the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry.

CDC ATSDR