



ATSDR Activities in Albemarle, North Carolina

What is ATSDR?

ATSDR is the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the federal public health agency that deals with human health issues related to hazardous chemicals in the environment. ATSDR is not a regulatory agency and does not make or enforce laws.

The agency conducts public health assessments at sites where there are concerns about health issues that may be related to hazardous chemical spills or releases. The public health assessment evaluates the conditions of exposure at the site and data about chemicals detected in the air, water, or soil at the site and surrounding area. ATSDR then evaluates the information to determine whether there is a threat to the health of people in the vicinity.

If chemicals are detected at levels of public health concern at the site, ATSDR provides people in the area with information on how they can limit their exposure to the chemicals. ATSDR also makes recommendations to health and environmental agencies. These recommendations may be for further sampling of air, water, or soil in the community or for immediate actions to reduce or prevent further exposure. To find out more about ATSDR, visit the ATSDR web page at www.atsdr.cdc.gov.

Why did ATSDR get involved at Albemarle?

Albemarle residents expressed concern that health problems in the community may be the result of exposures to industrial emissions from the nearby Carolina Solite facility. The North Carolina Waste Awareness and Reduction Network asked ATSDR and the state of North Carolina to investigate public health in the community and determine whether exposure to environmental contaminants may be causing elevated rates of disease in the community.

What were the results of the ATSDR public health assessment in Albemarle?

The first public health assessment for Albemarle, which was released for public comment in March 2001, evaluated data from a worker exposure study; data from biological sampling; and data from air and groundwater collected through 1999. In addition, this assessment reviewed a 1998 analysis of cancer mortality rates in Stanly County.

In September 2001, ATSDR will release a second public health assessment document evaluating air, soil, and sediment data collected in 2000.

On the basis of all the information available to ATSDR, it appears that the current levels of chemicals in air, groundwater, soil, and sediment at the Solite facility and surrounding community are **well below** levels known to cause adverse health effects. ATSDR therefore concludes that it is unlikely that health problems will result from exposure to chemicals currently released from the Solite facility. Air monitoring data was not collected before sometime in the 1990s; therefore it is not possible to evaluate the potential for health effects related to earlier releases.

What's next?

The final version of the first public health assessment document is expected to be released in August 2001.

In September, when the exact date is set for the release of the public comment version of the second public health assessment, ATSDR will issue a press release to local newspapers announcing the availability of the document in the information repositories. Community members will have the opportunity to comment on the assessment, and all comments will be addressed in the final version of the document.

The public health assessments will be available at the following repositories.

Stanly County Public Library

133 East Main Street
Albemarle, North Carolina 28001
704-986-3763

Stanly County Public Library, Norwood Branch

207 Pee Dee Avenue
Norwood, North Carolina 28128
704-474-3625

If you have questions or wish additional information about the Albemarle public health assessments, please contact one of the following ATSDR staff members.

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