

## Air Toxics Monitoring at Toledo Elementary School in Toledo, Oregon

In April 2011, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released the analysis report of air toxics monitoring data gathered near Toledo Elementary School in Toledo, Oregon.

Monitoring results from samples collected in August through December 2009 indicated that concentrations of the majority of air toxics measured near the school are below EPA's levels of concern associated with health problems from either short- or long-term exposures. Air toxics measured included acetaldehyde, benzene, 1,3-butadiene, manganese and nickel. EPA posted the report at: <http://www.epa.gov/schoolair>.

### Background on EPA's study at schools

As part of an initiative to understand whether outdoor toxic air pollution poses health concerns to schoolchildren, the Environmental Protection Agency performed short term monitoring for air toxics at 63 schools nationwide, including the Toledo Elementary School. Air toxics are pollutants known, or suspected to cause cancer and other serious health effects. EPA and DEQ regulate emissions of 187 air toxics under the Clean Air Act.

### Selecting schools

EPA chose schools that could be affected by pollution from industry, motor vehicles, and other sources. EPA chose Toledo Elementary School because it represents a rural school located near a large industrial facility – the Georgia-Pacific Containerboard facility. Harriet Tubman Leadership Academy, the other Oregon school, represents a school in an urban environment that is affected by multiple types of emissions.

### Air toxics sources

Reducing toxic air pollution is one of the greatest challenges and one of the most pressing issues of our time. USA Today published an article highlighting the results of a study of air toxics near schools brought considerable attention to this issue. However, the study only looked at part of the problem by focusing on one source – large industrial facilities.

While people living near industrial facilities can experience higher exposure to emissions, most of our exposure to toxic air pollution is caused by a variety of other sources that collectively produce up to 90 percent of the toxic air pollution in Oregon's air. These sources include vehicle

engines, fuel evaporation, outdoor burning, lawn and garden equipment and a wide variety of chemicals used by businesses and people.

Reducing air toxics in Oregon is a priority of the DEQ Air Quality program.

Both federal and state officials are working to reduce air toxics. Regulations on large and small manufacturers have resulted in considerable reductions of air toxics coming from many types of industrial processes. DEQ inspects facilities to make sure that they follow DEQ rules.

Though much more is needed to address air toxics in all areas of Oregon, DEQ has several long-standing programs that reduce toxic air pollutants:

- Vehicle inspection programs in the Portland and Rogue Valley areas
- Regulating emissions from industry and small businesses
- Assistance to small businesses to reduce the use of toxic chemicals
- Year-round air pollution advisories
- Assistance with diesel engine retrofits and replacement
- Anti-idling initiatives for heavy duty diesel and passenger cars and trucks
- Stricter wood stove requirements and change-out program

These programs have reduced levels of smog, fine particles as well as air toxics.

### For more information

To learn more about toxic air pollution in Oregon and DEQ's air toxics reduction efforts contact Cory-Ann Wind at 503-229-5388, [wind.cory@deq.state.or.us](mailto:wind.cory@deq.state.or.us) or go to [www.deq.state.or.us/aq/toxics/index.htm](http://www.deq.state.or.us/aq/toxics/index.htm).

For more information about monitoring for toxics at Oregon schools contact Madonna Navarez, EPA Region 10, 206-553-2117, [narvaez.madonna@epa.gov](mailto:narvaez.madonna@epa.gov) or go to [www.epa.gov/schoolair](http://www.epa.gov/schoolair).

### Alternative formats

*Alternative formats (Braille, large type) of this document can be made available. Contact DEQ's Office of Communications & Outreach, Portland, at (503) 229-5696, or toll-free in Oregon at 1-800-452-4011, ext. 5696.*



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