



Working for You at Hazardous Waste Sites

How does the Florida Department of Health protect public health around hazardous waste sites?

The federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has a cooperative agreement with the Florida Department of Health (DOH). The Florida DOH team that works at many of the state's hazardous waste sites is the **Health Assessment Team** in the **Division of Environmental Health**.

The **Health Assessment Team** consists of seven scientists who evaluate environmental and health data collected from other agencies. There is one education and information specialist.

We conduct **Public Health Assessments** and inform communities and other agencies of our findings and recommendations. Health assessments look at each chemical found at or associated with a hazardous waste site and its known health effects. Some chemicals are toxic in small amounts, and other common chemicals can be toxic in large amounts.

The **DOH** team looks at the data from samples gathered by other agencies, such as the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)** and the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**. We compare data from the site to national health guidelines.

The Health Assessment Team

- **Conducts** public health assessments
- **Seeks input** from residents of affected communities, their concerns and questions
- **Responds** to their concerns and questions
- **Advises the public** on how to protect themselves from exposure to chemicals at a site
- **Informs communities** of our findings and recommendations concerning the site
- **Informs community** healthcare professionals of our findings, giving them helpful materials
- **Advises** cleanup agencies on health issues

Florida DOH DOES NOT

- **Make or enforce laws or rules concerning hazardous waste**
- **Provide medical services for people exposed to hazardous waste**
- **Provide cleanup or relocation**
- **Take samples, except for some private well testing**

What is a Health Assessment?

Florida DOH conducts three kinds of Health Assessments.

- 1. The Public Health Assessment** is a broad look at an entire hazardous waste site—the soil, water, and air. It looks at all potential health effects from known chemicals at a site.
- 2. The Health Consultation** focuses on limited issues associated with the site. Examples include answering a specific question or reviewing special tests.
- 3. The Exposure Investigation** looks at samples from the human body, such as blood and urine, and/or the environment, like fish and garden produce. The Exposure Investigation also tells us if certain chemicals are present at harmful levels.

How can you get Florida DOH involved at a site near you?

Local officials, state, and local agencies, community groups, and individuals may petition U.S. ATSDR for a health assessment. Call toll-free during business hours at (877) 798-2772 for more information on petitions.

Community Involvement, Health Assessment Team

Division of Environmental Health, Florida Department of Health

4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin #A-08, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1712

(850) 245-4299 or toll free during business hours at **(877) 798-2772**

Check out our website: www.myfloridaeh.com/community/SUPERFUND/index.html

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