



South Coast
Air Quality Management District

21865 Copley Drive, Diamond Bar, CA 91765
<http://www.aqmd.gov>

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CONTACT: Sam Atwood
at AQMD (909) 396-3456
Cell: (909) 720-9056

Following U.S. EPA Toxics Report

**AQMD INVESTIGATION FINDS NO SIGNIFICANT AIR TOXIC RISK
FROM SANTA FE SPRINGS METAL FACILITY**

Results of air monitoring tests from a metal processing facility in Santa Fe Springs show that it does not pose a significant cancer risk to the surrounding community, South Coast Air Quality Management District officials said today.

During the last week of June, AQMD collected air samples at Heraeus Metal Processing Inc. at 13429 Alondra Blvd. in Santa Fe Springs and in nearby Cerritos. Samples were analyzed for the presence of hydrazine, a toxic chemical used in rocket fuel and a wide range of industrial applications.

The analysis showed that the facility currently emits less than two pounds per year of hydrazine. Computer modeling of these emissions shows that they would result

in a maximum lifetime cancer risk in the community of 0.5 in 1 million. That is 20 times lower than the threshold for public notification (10 in 1 million) and 50 times lower than the threshold for reducing toxic emissions and health risk (25 in 1 million) both required by AQMD rules.

“These results have shown that this facility does not pose a significant cancer risk to Cerritos or the community surrounding the plant,” said Barry Wallerstein, AQMD’s executive officer.

The potential for toxic risk in Cerritos attracted attention after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its National Air Toxics Assessment (NATA) report on June 24. It found that residents in one portion of Cerritos experienced a 1,244 in 1 million cancer risk, assuming a lifetime of exposure, primarily due to hydrazine emissions from Heraeus. That risk was more than 30 times the national average according to the EPA report.

Following announcement of the report, AQMD immediately dispatched field inspectors and engineers to the facility. They confirmed that hydrazine is introduced into equipment in a closed system where it reacts with solution to form harmless compounds in the metals recovery process. AQMD source testing engineers took air samples from air-pollution-control exhaust stacks at Heraeus and also from outdoor air downwind in Cerritos.

“We have agreed to work closely with EPA prior to the release of its next National Air Toxics Assessment report to ensure that any facilities identified with elevated cancer risk are verified with accurate emissions, source testing and inspection reports,” Wallerstein said.

EPA's NATA report appears to contain outdated information when compared to actual facility emissions today. For example, the next three facilities in the report causing the highest cancer risk in the region have been out of business or have no reported emissions since at least 2001.

In addition, the report stated that Heraeus emitted 1,250 pounds of hydrazine in 2002 when in fact the facility has not reported that amount of annual emissions since about 1991 when it was operated by a previous owner, PGP Industries Inc. Since calculations of emissions at that time were crude in comparison to today's methods, AQMD officials now are trying to determine if the facility ever emitted that much hydrazine. Based on the facility's operations history, its actual emissions in 2002 and possibly as early as 1991 were likely similar to today's emissions of less than two pounds per year of hydrazine.

AQMD last year released the final report for its Multiple Air Toxics Exposure Study (MATES III), a landmark study of toxic air pollution in the South Coast Air Basin. Unlike EPA's report, MATES III used the latest emissions data from facilities as well as tens of thousands of air samples collected during a 24-month period. The study found the average cancer risk across the region is about 1,200 in 1 million during a lifetime exposure. It also found that about 84 percent of the cancer risk is due to diesel fuel combustion from trucks, trains and ships. (Cancer risk from diesel was not included in EPA's NATA report.) The highest cancer risk levels in MATES III were found in areas of elevated diesel exhaust including near freeways, rail yards and the ports.

AQMD is the air pollution control agency for Orange County and major portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside counties.