



Environmental News

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February 11, 1979

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

STURGEON, MISSOURI CHEMICAL SPILL

On Friday evening, February 9, the Monsanto Chemical Company told Environmental Protection Agency Region 7 officials that the shipment of chlorinated phenolic compounds, which was spilled in a rail car derailment in Sturgeon, Mo., on January 10, contained trace quantities of a contaminant known as dioxin (TCDD). Monsanto reported three separate measurements averaging 37 parts per billion (34, 36, and 40 p.p.b.). The company could not identify which particular forms of TCDD were present.

Acting on this information, Harry Gilmer, Region 7 on-scene coordinator, ordered a sample of the extract from the contaminated soil from the spill site sent to the University of Illinois at Champaign where highly sophisticated analytical equipment is available. With the assistance of EPA Region 7 scientists, Dr. Billy Fairless and Dr. Robert D. Kleopfer, Dr. Carter Cook of the university performed analyses which confirmed the presence of 2-3-7-8 TCDD at a level of less than 0.01 p.p.b. Gilmer's team had anticipated the possibility of dioxin con-

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tamination, and had both performed some analyses and had questioned Monsanto on this point.

According to medical scientists at EPA Headquarters in Washington, D.C., the new information is of concern, but presents no cause for change in cleanup procedures currently underway. Dr. Joseph Seifter, senior medical advisor to the Office of Toxic Substances, stated "The presence of dioxin in the spilled material changes the scope of our review, but does not represent cause for immediate alarm at the levels reported."

Dr. Seifter had led a team of medical and public health experts before a town meeting in Sturgeon on Thursday night, held at the request of Senator Tom Eagleton. Concern among residents is still strong, as odors from the spill linger. Seifter's group answered questions on the known and suspected effects of phenol and various chlorinated phenolic compounds, especially orthochlorophenol, which were known at that time to be present in the spilled material. They were preparing a report of recommendations for further studies in the area to be presented early this week.

Additional samples of the shipped material have been obtained from Monsanto by Region 7 officials. These are being prepared for further analysis. Steven Jellinek, EPA Assistant Administrator for Toxic Substances, will be meeting with Seifter's group on Monday to coordinate the further activities. "We intend to take all necessary steps to assure the continued identification and removal of these spilled chemicals," declared Jellinek. "EPA Headquarters will provide Region 7 with any assistance needed to complete the job and protect the health of local residents."

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United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Office of Public Affairs
Region 7
324 East Eleventh St
Kansas City Mo 64106

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\$300

Postage and
Fees Paid
Environmental
Protection
Agency

EPA 335



Third Class
Bulk

DATE

January 7, 1981

SUBJECT

TSCA Substantial Risk
Evaluation - Dichlorophenol

REFERENCE

TO

Memorandum to File

cc C. F. Callis
J. R. Condray
✓ G. J. Levinskas
G. Roush
J. D. Wilson
P. L. Wright

File
DMEH CENTRAL
FILES

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SUBJECT TO PROTECTIVE ORDER.

On January 6, 1981, the above named persons and the undersigned met to consider whether certain information reasonably supported the conclusion that dichlorophenol marketed by Monsanto presents a substantial risk of injury to health or the environment requiring immediate notification to the EPA.

A memo dated October 10, 1980, from R. F. Ivory (Dayton Lab) to J. A. Gloeckner (Krummrich Plant) described the results of analyses of 81 samples of chlorophenols (including 55 samples and a number of spikes, duplicates and blanks) for the presence of chlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins. The table of analytical results attached to the memo showed that some samples contained tetrachlorodibenzo-dioxin (TCDD) at levels ranging from one to three parts per billion, with only one analysis indicating a higher level. It was apparently the detection of TCDD in dichlorophenol that led to the subject meeting.

The major purchaser of dichlorophenol (Diamond Shamrock) uses it in the manufacture of 2,4-D. There are two other smaller customers, one of which uses the material in the manufacture of 2,4-D, while the other incorporates it into oil well additives.

It was concluded that the extremely low levels of TCDD found in dichlorophenol, particularly when further diluted by customers' operations, would be unlikely to cause any health or environmental hazard. No attendee at the subject meeting was aware of any harm which has been caused to health or the environment as a result of the trace amount of TCDD present in dichlorophenol.

It was, therefore, concluded that notification is not required by TSCA Section 8(e).

The attendees at the subject meeting agreed, however, to recommend to the dichlorophenol marketing group that customers purchasing the material be advised of the above described analytical results.

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