

Emissions rate is top in Illinois

By DAVID GOSNELL
News-Democrat

The highest concentration of toxic chemicals in the state are released into the skies, streams and soil of Madison and St. Clair counties.

And while the metro-east has only 4 percent of the industries that must report releases of 313 chemicals considered poisonous to humans, those industries managed to create 25 percent of the state's toxic air, water and soil emissions.

According to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency's annual toxic chemical inventory report, Madison and St. Clair counties' industries during 1989 released more toxic chemicals per site than the more numerous industries in Cook County.

"It boils down to a much smaller number of facilities accounting for a much larger percent statewide," said Joe Goodner, of the IEPA's Office of Chemical Safety. Goodner said metro-east industries appear to release certain chemicals in much greater concentrations than in other industrialized areas.

Cook County, although containing about 63 percent of the number of industries reporting chemical emissions, accounts for about 48 percent of the state's total chemical emissions.

The report, completed in May, is based on chemical amounts reported released by industries in 1989. The report does not identify chemical amounts by industry.

The area's leading industries — Shell Oil Co., Granite City Steel, Monsanto, Clark Oil, Cerro Copper and Olin Corp. — all must report chemicals they use and release in the ground, water and air.

A total of 51 industries reported chemical releases — 32 in Madison County and 19 in St. Clair County. But St. Clair County by far had a higher concentration of toxic chemical releases, releasing 46,624,000 pounds of chemicals compared to Madison County's total of 15,816,000.

Much of St. Clair County's emissions involved water discharges, and treating chemicals in water treatment plants. Madison County industries released more toxic chemicals per pound into the air than did St. Clair County industries.

Toxic

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trichloroethane, which showed a significant emission increase — from 971,651 pounds in 1988 to 1,336,000 pounds in 1989.

In both years, nine industries reported releasing trichloroethane, a liquid or vapor commonly used as a cleaning solvent for metal that can be harmful if breathed. Many area

industries, including Shell, Monsanto, Granite City Steel and Cerro Copper, use the chemical.

Hydrochloric acid topped the two-county chemical release list, with nine industries reporting the release of 17,576,000 pounds of the chemical.

However, Goodner said that, because chemical reporting has only gone on for three years, the agency is not drawing any conclusions from

decreases or increases in chemical emissions.

"It's inappropriate and premature to do trend analysis," said Goodner. "The facilities have been fine tuning their approach to estimating (what kind of chemicals they produce and how much they produce)," he said.

He said some chemical totals have changed as a result of stricter reporting requirements and from new

methods of estimating rather than being a reflection of any increases in the manufacture or release of the chemicals.

In the future, however, the toxic inventory reports will be used as a basis to begin targeting some industries for reductions of the release of some of the most toxic chemicals, Goodner said.

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In a comparison between 1988 and 1989, the two counties showed a net decrease in pounds of chemicals released into the environment — from about 73 million pounds in 1988 to about 62.5 million pounds in 1989. But 21 of 44 chemicals that were reported in both years showed a net increase in emissions.

Among the increases included benzene, a potentially cancer-causing product commonly extracted in gasoline production, and

not at WOK
(dec. from 503 to 172K)
See TOXIC/3A

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1A + 3A

FILE

W6K

2E94ET MSO

Monsanto reported 26.7M in 1988, 25.2 in 1989 inc. in HCl, MEI, PNP, H2PO4

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MONSANTO CO

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