

Papelera Puertorriqueña, Utuado, PR Health Consultation



Purpose

The purpose of this fact sheet is to describe the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) activities and findings at the Papelera Puertorriqueña Site.

Why did ATSDR become involved in this site?

ATSDR is a federal public health agency of the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Papelera Puertorriqueña, Inc. (PPI) is located in Utuado, Puerto Rico. The facility is situated on a steep embankment within 40 feet of the Vivi River. PPI has operated at this location since 1965. It is an active facility that manufactures paper and plastic bags (coffee bags, bags for bakery products, rice bags, supermarket bags), and cardboard boxes (pizza boxes). Other paper-based products (greetings cards and paper gift wraps) are stored on site and distributed by PPI. Inks and solvents are used in the manufacturing process.

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) became involved when visual inspections and reports from Puerto Rico Environmental Quality Board (PREQB), nearby residents, and PPI employees in the 1980's, 1990's, and mid-2000's revealed a variety of emissions and wastewater releases. In response to these observations, the EPA proposed PPI for inclusion on the National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL is a list of sites that the EPA has designated for further investigation. ATSDR prepared a Health Consultation in order to evaluate contaminants at the site.

The primary contaminants found are :

- trichloroethylene (TCE)
- tetrachloroethylene (PCE)
- toluene
- cadmium

What did ATSDR do?

ATSDR conducted a health consultation to find out if persons could come into contact with chemicals from the PPI site in amounts large enough to cause illness.

What were ATSDR's findings?

ATSDR defines a public health hazard as a physical hazard or evidence of site-related exposure to hazardous substances that could result in adverse health effects. Based on review of available information, ATSDR concludes that the conditions at PPI do not represent a public health hazard that requires immediate action. ATSDR will provide an evaluation of additional health concerns as more data becomes available.

What are ATSDR's recommendations?

- The EPA should continue efforts to describe the extent of contamination and control releases from the PPI facility.
- Data reviewed did not indicate any potential health impact from future swimming, wading and fishing in the river.

Where do I find more information?

You can read the health consultations at:

the ATSDR web site:

<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/PHA/HCPHA.asp?State=PR>

You can also read the health consultation at the

Universidad del Este

Ave. Fernando Ribas Dominicci Carr. 111 Km 1.8 Utuado, PR.

Or you can contact

- Maria Teran-Maclver, Health Communications Specialist at 770-488-0720 or email her at: mnt0@cdc.gov.
- Racquel Stephenson, Regional Representative, at Edison Office: 732-906-6931 NYC Office: 212-637-4307 or email her at: Stephenson.Racquel@epa.gov

