

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) Statement about the Letter Health Consultation ["Evaluation of Potential Health Impacts for Ethylene Oxide Emissions"](#)

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) on August 21, 2018, released a Letter Health Consultation report, ["Evaluation of Potential Health Impacts for Ethylene Oxide Emissions"](#), in relation to the Sterigenics International, Incorporated facility in Willowbrook, IL. Sterigenics uses ethylene oxide to sterilize medical equipment and other products. ATSDR prepared the report at the request of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency-Region 5, and posted the findings on the ATSDR website to share with the public.

The emissions of ethylene oxide from the Sterigenics International, Inc. facility in Willowbrook, IL **are not an immediate threat to public health and are not considered to be an emergency situation**. ATSDR recommended to U.S. EPA that actions be taken to reduce emissions of ethylene oxide from this facility to protect the public from long-term exposures that could harm their health.

The conclusion in the ATSDR Letter Health Consultation report,

"If measured and modeled data represent typical EtO ambient concentrations in ambient air, an elevated cancer risk exists for residents and off-site workers in the Willowbrook community surrounding the Sterigenics facility. These evaluated risks present a public health hazard to these populations"

is to inform and support the regulatory decisions being made by the state and EPA to reduce emissions from that facility to protect public health.

ATSDR based this conclusion on estimated cancer risks that are calculated using conservative assumptions about a lifetime exposure to the highest levels of ethylene oxide that were measured in Willowbrook commercial and residential areas near the facility. The highest measured levels of ethylene oxide in those areas were about 1,000 times lower than levels associated with cancer risks in scientific studies of workers with industrial exposure to EtO.

U.S. EPA has been working with Illinois EPA and Sterigenics to reduce emissions of ethylene oxide from the company's facility. In July 2018, the company installed additional pollution controls to capture ethylene oxide emissions. U.S. EPA and Illinois EPA will monitor the effectiveness of the new equipment to determine whether any other actions are needed to protect public health.