



Regional Poison Control Public Guidance Document

Richmond Plastics Plant Fire



Background: On April 11, 2023, a fire started within a plastic recycling company located in Richmond, Indiana, near the Ohio border. The Indiana and Central Ohio Poison Centers, Wayne County Health Department, EPA, CDC, and other local, state, and federal agencies are working together to provide guidance regarding decontamination, treatment, and minimize risk of exposure to toxins released by the fire. This document contains guidance for the public about the potential health impact of this fire.

Agents: Smoke and particulate matter (PM), hydrogen cyanide, benzene, chlorine, naphthalene, carbon monoxide, asbestos.

Symptoms: Serious or long-term health effects are unlikely. Many early symptoms may have been related to smoke and/or particulate matter inhalation and stress reactions related to being involved in, or close to, an environmental incident. Eye, skin, lung, and/or throat irritation may have occurred. Smoke and/or particulate matter inhalation and chemical exposures can cause flare-ups of preexisting respiratory diseases such as asthma or emphysema. Initial symptoms of acute chemical exposure may have included nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain, dizziness, headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, cough, or wheezing. Benzene and asbestos are known to increase the risk of certain cancers, though typically in people who have been exposed to high doses over many years.

Management: Anyone experiencing symptoms that they are concerned may be linked to the fire should call the regional Poison Center hotline at 800-222-1222. This hotline is staffed 24/7 by nurses, pharmacists, and physicians, and all calls are confidential and free of charge.

Testing Considerations: Healthcare providers have been advised to use their best clinical judgment and consult with toxicology experts for additional testing and patient management advice. Biomarkers of exposure will likely be undetectable or very low at this point and have low utility for clinical management.

Additional event-specific resources are available for consultation:

- **Poison Help Line (Indiana and Central Ohio Poison Centers): 1-800-222-1222**
- **Community Help Line: (765-973-9300)**
 - For questions about the evacuation zone, shelter, supplies, air and soil quality, and other general topics
- **Public Health**
 - Wayne County Health Department 765-973-9245
 - Ohio Department of Health 614-466-3543
- **Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit (PEHSU)**
 - Ohio / Indiana / Michigan: **1-866-967-7337**
- **Center for Disease Control 1-770-488-7100**
- **Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Hotline: 1-866-361-0526 (8a-8p)**
- **Indiana State Board of Animal Health: 317-544-2400**
Division of Animal Health, Ohio Department of Agriculture: 1-614-728-6220
 - For questions about animal health

Updates to this document will be made as more information becomes available. [Version 1 – 4.16.2023].

