

Suffolk Fumigation Stakeholder Meeting

Presented by: Rebecca LePrell

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VDH Toxicology Program

- **Mission**

- Prevent and control chemical-related health problems

- **Specific Activities**

- Advise the Governor, other state agencies, the federal government, and local governing bodies
- Disseminate information on toxic substances (technical reports, information sheets, advisories, and press releases)
- Conduct disease surveillance for exposure to toxic substances
- Provide consultation and response to emergency operation centers during environmental accidents, natural disasters, and acts of terrorism

Role of VDH: Fumigation Study

- Assess the presence of fumigants in the community
 - Compare ambient air concentrations of fumigants to health-based standards
- Prevent or reduce chemical exposure in community
 - Recommend actions for reducing exposure
- Identify health effects due to fumigation activities
 - Record any health concerns from community

Health Assessment

The process includes:

- Identifying actual human contact (also called exposure) with chemicals in the environment
- Identifying the types of illnesses that might be related to contact with chemicals from the site
- Recommending health-based follow-up actions, such as an exposure investigation
- Recommending ways to reduce or prevent exposures

Health Assessment

The process does **not** include:

- Performing medical examinations of individuals in the community
- Determining whether illnesses found in a community are actually associated with exposure to site-related chemicals
- Establishing site clean-up levels

Chemical of Concern

- **Chemical of Concern**
 - Methyl bromide (bromomethane)
- **Route of Exposure**
 - Inhalation*
 - Skin/eye contact
- **Health effects**
 - Headaches, dizziness, fainting, weakness, confusion, speech impairment, visual effects
 - Paralysis, lung injury, kidney damage, and heart problems (rare)
 - Not a known carcinogen

VDH Preliminary Findings

- Methyl bromide levels in air are not likely to cause adverse health effects
- Peak concentrations of methyl bromide detected during aeration could adversely affect nearby individuals
- Measureable amounts of methyl bromide found in two background samples
- Assessing the risk to community is not possible at this time without further sampling by DEQ

VDH Next Steps

- Review DEQ's air sampling data collected during fumigating and venting to address impact to adjacent businesses, schools, and residential homes
- Assess background levels of methyl bromide and evaluate potential impact on public health

Partners

- City Council
- Community members
- VA Department of Environmental Quality
- VA Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services
- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
- VDH – Toxicology Program
- VDH - Western Tidewater Health District

Contact Information

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