

Southwest Indianapolis Air Toxics Study Article 3

Air toxics study shows health risk similar to other urban areas ***Vehicles drive local risk***

An Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) study shows that concentrations of air toxics in Southwest Indianapolis are similar to other Midwestern cities. Motor vehicles, not industries, emit the highest volume of air toxics locally.

The study results calculate the increased acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) health risk from air quality in the 10 square mile study area.

Two air toxics, benzene and acrolein, were measured above the health protective level. However, the levels were similar to what is present in Indiana's other urban areas and across the country.

"The study was conceived to see if IDEM needed to take action in order to further protect public health," said Thomas Easterly, IDEM Commissioner. "The results from air sampling and comprehensive computer-based modeling confirm air toxics levels comparable to a typical urban area."

"There are always opportunities to improve air quality and, through simple actions, we can reduce air toxics," said Easterly. "We've initiated communication with several businesses in the area to explore opportunities for pollution prevention. In the meantime, there are things all of us can do to improve our air quality. Reducing unnecessary vehicle idling and conserving energy are two of the best things that citizens can do to improve the air in Southwest Indianapolis."

IDEM communicated the study results to the public during a meeting at the Mary Rigg Neighborhood Center on March 11, 2010. The agency will also present the study results to several community groups in Southwest Indianapolis over the coming weeks.

To review the complete study and learn more about how health risk is calculated, visit IDEM's Web site at www.idem.IN.gov/4500.htm.

This article is the last in a three-part series written by IDEM to explain the Southwest Indianapolis Air Toxics Study.

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IDEM's Southwest Indianapolis Air Toxics Study

Who: Indiana Department of Environmental Management, City of Indianapolis, U. S. EPA, air toxics experts, and local residents

What: Air quality study that monitored 74 air toxics and 12 metals in Southwest Indianapolis

Where: The study area is between 10th Street to the north, Bluff Road to the east, High School Road to the west and Hanna Avenue to the south.

When: Air samples were taken between 2006 and 2008.

Why: National air toxics models identified Southwest Indianapolis as an area that could potentially have high air emissions.

How: IDEM used a U.S. EPA grant to take air samples, collect emissions data, and run computer modeling.

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IDEM will present the findings of the Southwest Indianapolis Air Toxics Study at:

- List of meetings

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