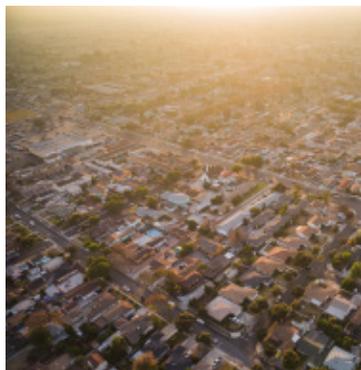


# Hexavalent Chromium Investigation in the City of Paramount

## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



This sheet provides information and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about a toxic metal called hexavalent chromium (chrome 6) and related environmental investigation activities. Chrome 6 can cause negative health effects, and high levels have been found in the air in a mixed industrial and residential area in the City of Paramount. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (DPH) is part of an Interagency Task Force, led by the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) that is investigating the high levels of chrome 6 and possible health risks to people living and working in the area.

### 1. What is hexavalent chromium (Chrome 6)?

Hexavalent chromium is a toxic form of a metal called chromium. Chrome 6 is produced by industrial processes like steel production, leather tanning, and welding. It is known to cause cancer in humans and have other health effects after long periods of exposure (years or decades). Metal forging facilities can produce considerable amounts of metal emissions, which travel through the air and settle in nearby soils. Historically, these facilities have been exempt from air district regulations and a newly proposed rule would enforce stricter pollution control standards.

### 2. What has been found through air quality testing?

SCAQMD began monitoring air quality in the City of Paramount in August 2013. Air quality monitoring is done by installing special equipment that measures chrome 6 levels in the air over a 24 hour period three times per week. Air quality monitoring by SCAQMD began at Carlton Forge Works, and was later expanded to the south, near Anaplex and Aerocraft (north of the intersection of Garfield Ave. and Alondra Blvd). In October 2016, air monitoring near the intersection of Minnesota and Madison streets found chrome 6 levels much higher than in other areas of Los Angeles County. Monitoring was then expanded to the southeast industrial area of the City and area schools. The expanded monitoring in the southeast industrial area has shown high levels of chrome 6, up to 50 times greater than levels in other areas of Los Angeles County.

### KEY POINTS

- High levels of toxic chrome 6 have been found in the air in the City of Paramount
- Exposure to high levels of chrome 6 for a long period of time can negatively affect health
- Two metal factories were ordered by DPH and SCAQMD to reduce emissions
- Investigation into other chrome 6 sources is on-going



### 3. What has been found in outdoor air near schools?

To date, SCAQMD has tested air outside 11 area schools: Alondra Middle School, Frank Zamboni Middle School, Harry Wirtz Elementary School, Lincoln Elementary School, Los Cerritos Elementary School, Major Lynn Mokler Elementary School, Mark Keppel Elementary School, Paramount High School West, Roosevelt Elementary School, Tanner Elementary School, and Wesley Gaines Elementary School. The latest SCAQMD school report shows that most school outdoor air is similar to some other parts of LA County (e.g. Compton) and higher than others (e.g. Downtown Los Angeles, the Valley). However, it was recently found that Lincoln Elementary School has, on average, outdoor chrome 6 levels that are 5-10 times higher than other parts of LA. These levels are of concern if they continue over the long-term. Greater enforcement of emissions standards is needed to prevent long-term exposure and potential health risks.

### 4. What has been found through testing soil?

Preliminary soil testing has shown elevated levels of chrome 6 and other metals in the industrial zones. To date, elevated levels of metals have not been found beyond the industrial zone. However, more rigorous testing is needed to confirm this; soil sampling in recreational parks and residential areas is ongoing and may result in additional recommendations to protect health.

### 5. What are the health effects of chrome 6?

Possible exposure to chrome 6 occurs when chrome 6 comes in physical contact with a person's nose, mouth, eyes, or skin. This includes ingestion of contaminated soil and dust, breathing in contaminated air, or drinking contaminated water.

Exposure to high levels of chrome 6 over many years can cause:

- Increased risk of lung and nasal cancers
- Nose, throat, and lung irritation (runny nose, coughing, trouble breathing, wheezing)
- Nasal sores
- Skin sores or irritation
- Gastrointestinal irritation (diarrhea, abdominal pain, vomiting)

## 6. What is being done to decrease chrome 6 levels?

Local and state agencies are aggressively investigating sources of chrome 6. Two metal factories in Paramount (Aerocraft and Anaplex) have been identified as sources of chrome 6. On November 29, 2016, SCAQMD ordered the factories to stop chromium-emitting processes, and two days later DPH directed the factories to take all necessary action to eliminate the public health risk. SCAQMD is continually monitoring emissions to be sure levels stay below the standards set by SCAQMD. DPH will continue to work with SCAQMD as they investigate other sources of chrome 6.

## 7. What should I do to prevent health problems from chrome 6 exposure?

Based on information to date, the main concern is levels of chrome 6 in and around industrial facilities. There is not yet enough information available to advise residents about the need to install air filters in homes. For residents who plan to install air filters, they should place a particle filter with a higher rating (such as a MERV 8) in their air handling system. Filters should be changed at least every 2-3 months.

The following precautionary measures can help reduce health risks:

- Avoid smoking (e.g. cigars, cigarettes, pipes) or exposure to smoke
- Control dirt and dust in your home. Don't wear shoes inside the house. Use a mop and wet wipe to dust indoor surfaces.
- Wash any fruits or vegetables that are grown close to the industrial area to remove any possible residue.
- Keep children out of industrial zones, where contaminated soils have been found.
- Limit vigorous outdoor exercise, such as running, in the immediate industrial area.

These additional measures can help reduce health risks for employees working in the industrial area:

- Reduce workplace exposure to dust, mist, and fumes that may contain metals. This includes wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, protective clothing, eye protection, and respirator.
- Use wet clean up methods for dust. Do not dry sweep. Vacuum with a HEPA filter. Wash hands before eating or drinking, including before meal breaks.
- When leaving work, remove work clothing and wash hands to avoid bringing contamination home.
- If you have any health concerns, see your health care provider. If your health care provider has health-related questions, please call or refer them to Dr. Cyrus Rangan, Director of the Bureau of Toxicology and Environmental Assessment, at 213-738-3220.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Los Angeles County  
Department of Public Health  
<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/airtoxins/>  
213-738-3232

South Coast Air  
Quality Management  
District (SCAQMD)  
<http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/compliance/air-monitoring-activities>

Please report odors or  
dust to 800-CUT-SMOG  
(800-288-7664).

