

OUTDOOR AIR NEAR SCHOOLS

Chromium 6 in the City of Paramount



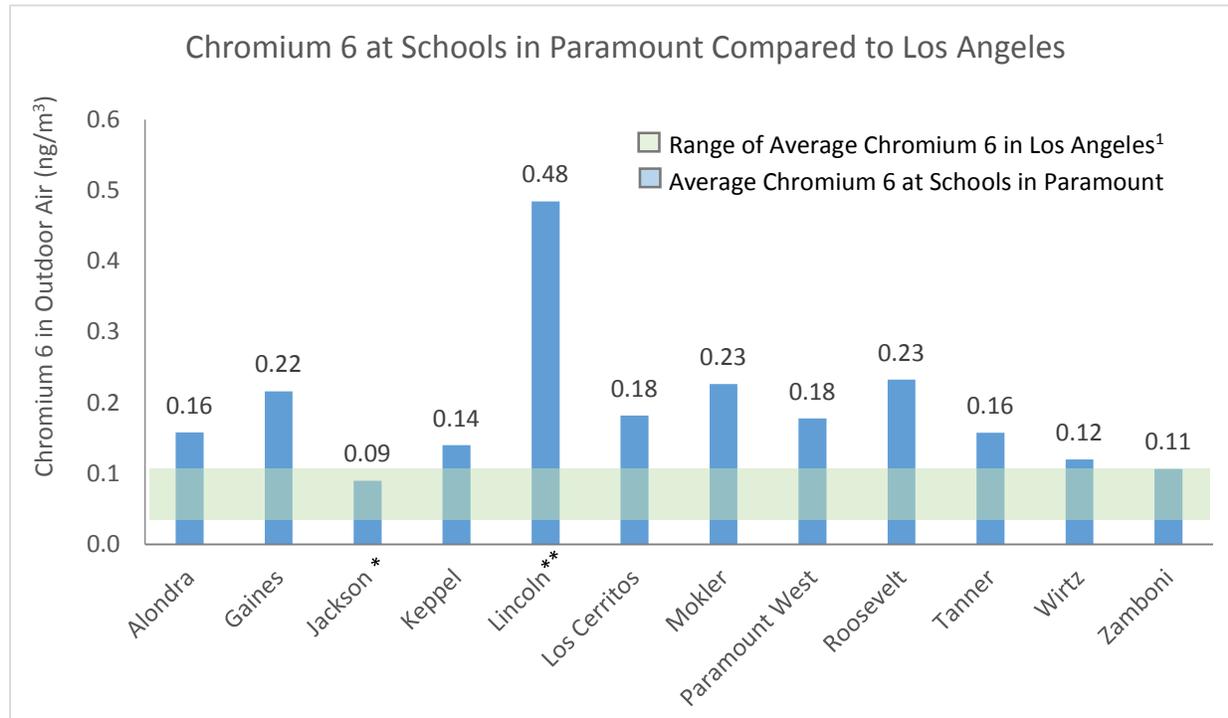
Chromium 6 is a metal used in certain industrial processes, such as metal plating, leather tanning and welding. In late 2016, the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) determined that overall, the levels of chromium 6 in Paramount are higher than elsewhere in the Los Angeles area. Since then, SCAQMD, California Air Resources Board and other local agencies have expanded the investigation to determine the extent and potential sources of the problem. Details of the investigation can be found at: www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/compliance/air-monitoring-activities. As part of the investigation, air monitoring has been performed in several schools in Paramount. While exposure to chromium 6 does not generally lead to immediate health symptoms, exposure to high levels over many years may increase the risk of lung and nasal cancers.

What has been done to check for chromium 6 in the air near schools?

Since December 2016, the SCAQMD has tested the outdoor air near 12 public schools in Paramount for chromium 6. The air testing looks at the average amount of chromium 6 in the outdoor air over 24 hours.

What did the air testing near schools find?

The levels of chromium 6 in the air near schools are about the same as levels in other residential areas of Paramount. Schools and other residential areas of Paramount have average levels of chromium 6 that are higher than levels of chromium 6 typically found in the Los Angeles area. The graph below shows the average levels of chromium 6 at the schools through July 9, 2017 and the average levels seen in the central and southern regions of Los Angeles County, which range from 0.04 to 0.11 nanograms per cubic meter (ng/m³).¹ These levels do not pose an immediate threat to health; however, further investigation is necessary to determine the sources, and to reduce emissions into the community.



*Jackson Elementary School result is from one 24-hour outdoor air test on January 7, 2017.

**Lincoln Elementary School monitor is just off-campus, on the same side of street as school property.

¹Multiple Air Toxics Exposure Study IV annual average levels of chromium 6 from the air monitoring locations closest to Paramount, including Compton, North Long Beach, Huntington Park, Pico Rivera and downtown Los Angeles (South Coast Air Quality Management District, May 2015).

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What is being done overall to address high levels of chromium 6 in Paramount?

The following important steps are being taken:

- Local and state agencies are working to find the businesses that are producing chromium 6 and lower the amount of chromium 6 they release.
- The SCAQMD is developing new air quality rules to better regulate chromium 6 in metal processing facilities.
- The City of Paramount is proposing revised zoning rules for metal processing operations to keep communities safer from emissions.
- The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health tested for chromium 6 in indoor air in homes close to select metal facilities with known air emissions of chromium 6 and, in partnership with the City of Paramount, tested for chromium 6 in soil near homes. Additionally, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control, in partnership with the City of Paramount, tested the soil at Village Skate Park. The sampling results to date indicate that direct contact with soil or inhaling indoor air do not pose an immediate health risk and efforts should focus on reducing levels in the outdoor air.

What are the health effects from breathing in chromium 6?

Breathing chromium 6 does not usually cause immediate health symptoms. However, breathing chromium 6 over many years can increase your risk of lung and nasal cancers. In addition, breathing chromium 6 at high levels over time can cause irritation to the nose, throat and lungs (runny nose, coughing or nose sores), and can worsen existing conditions such as asthma and other respiratory illnesses.

What can I do to reduce potential health effects from chromium 6?

The following precautionary measures may help reduce possible exposure to chromium 6:

- Limit physical activity around industrial facilities.
- Keep children away from industrial facilities, where soil and dust may be unhealthy.
- Wash fruits or vegetables grown at home if located close to industrial facilities.
- Keep dirt and dust out of your home. Avoid wearing shoes inside the home. Use a mop and wet cloth to clean dust inside your home.
- Avoid contact with tobacco smoke (e.g. cigars, cigarettes, pipes).

What about odors at schools? Are they harmful?

Odors have been reported at some schools. These odors are not likely to be caused by chromium 6, which tends to be odorless. Odors in your community can lead to symptoms, such as nausea, dizziness, headaches and irritation of the eye, nose or throat. Symptoms related to odors at school should be reported to the school or to your family healthcare provider. Please report any outdoor odors to SCAQMD by calling **1-800-CUT-SMOG**.

What about indoor air at schools? Do the schools need air filters?

Good housekeeping practices help maintain a clean and healthy indoor environment. School maintenance personnel in the Paramount Unified School District do the following:

- Vacuum classrooms with high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters.
- Regularly change air filters.

Testing the air inside school buildings will help determine if additional measures are necessary. Paramount Unified School District is conducting testing of the air inside school buildings for chromium 6. Results will be shared when testing and analysis is completed. For more information, please contact the office of the Assistant Superintendent of Business Services at (562) 602-6025.

For more information, please contact:

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, 213-738-3232

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/airtoxins/>

SCAQMD, 800-288-7664

<http://www.aqmd.gov/home/regulations/compliance/air-monitoring-activities>