

COMMUNITY ADVISORY - May 13, 2022

South Coast Air Quality Management Notifies Los Angeles County Public Health of Release of Hazardous Substance at Sterigenics facility located in Vernon



BACKGROUND:

On May 6, 2022, South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) notified Public Health and the general public that air monitoring detected elevated levels of ethylene oxide on-site at Sterigenics, located at 4900 Gifford Avenue in the City of Vernon.

Ethylene Oxide is a gas used in the facility to sterilize medical equipment. Ethylene Oxide has a sweet, but pungent chemical odor.

SCAQMD is conducting air monitoring near the Sterigenics buildings as well as multiple locations within the community. At this time, SCAQMD reports that measurements of ethylene oxide in the community near Sterigenics are below health risk levels established by the California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment. To obtain more information on SCAQMD investigation visit <http://www.aqmd.gov/home/news-events/community-investigations/sterigenics>.

The City of Vernon's Health and Environmental Control, the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for the city is also required to regulate the Sterigenics facility, ensuring that they operate in accordance with State and local laws which includes the handling of hazardous materials and/or hazardous waste.

Public Health will stay in close communication and work with SCAQMD as they continue to monitor community air conditions and the City of Vernon's Health and Environmental Control as they ensure continued compliance with state laws.

Public Health in partnership with SCAQMD and the City of Vernon will notify the community of any levels of concern or needed actions as appropriate. At this time, May 13, 2022, readings from SCAQMD do not indicate that health protective actions are needed by the community.

TO REPORT CONCERNS

If you live near the Sterigenics facilities and are experiencing bad smells, you can report odors by calling: 800-CUT-SMOG (1-800-288-7664)

Or filing a complaint online:

www.aqmd.gov/home/air-quality/complaints

If you have questions regarding health concerns

Call: 626-430-9821

Email: tox@ph.lacounty.gov

HEALTH FACTS:

Short-term exposure to ethylene oxide in humans can irritate the eyes, nose, throat, and lungs. Long-term exposure can cause damage to the brain and nervous system. Ethylene oxide has been linked to cancer in humans, including breast and blood cancers.

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO PROTECT YOURSELF?

At this time, no specific action is required.

For updates on this issue, please visit:

<http://ph.lacounty.gov/eh/safety/local-issues.htm>

or

<http://www.aqmd.gov/home/news-events/community-investigations/sterigenics>.