



Sikes Oil January 16, 2002

Introduction

In February, 2000, a citizen residing near Sikes Oil Service in Jackson County, Georgia, petitioned the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) for an investigation to determine whether exposure to air emissions from the tanker cleaning operation at the Sikes Oil facility might be causing or exacerbating relatives' and neighbors' health problems. Specifically, the resident stated that odors from the facility occur mostly at night, and that these odors cause eye itching and burning, coughing, and an increase in the frequency and severity of respiratory-related health complaints. In response, the Georgia Division of Public Health (GDPH), under a Cooperative Agreement with ATSDR, conducted a health consultation.

Site Description and History

Because oil-processing operations, including the tanker cleaning operation, were discontinued in late 1999, there are no current exposures from these activities. Regarding past exposures when the oil processing operations were ongoing, there is limited data, and we cannot conclusively determine whether emissions from that process could have contributed to health effects.

However, based on the limited data that is available, (e.g., emissions data, inspection reports and community complaint/concern information) we do not believe that the past exposures represent a chronic health threat.

Results

It is likely that residents might have been exposed to fugitive emissions and odors. However, based on the nature of the historic operations at the site, we believe these exposures, if they occurred, were likely intermittent and to relatively low levels. Such releases may have caused or contributed to acute health effects (e.g., coughing, eye irritation, etc.) and exacerbated existing conditions in some exposed individuals but the effects would likely have been transient.

Conclusions/Recommendations

GDPH classifies past exposure to tanker cleaning emissions at the site as **no apparent public health hazard** and makes no public health recommendations at this time. GDPH will review additional as it becomes available, and will respond to community health concerns about the facility should they arise.