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Ohio EPA Releases First Air Toxics Summary Report

Ohio's air quality has been improving during the last decade, although improvements are still needed in urban areas and some specific sections of the state. Ten years of monitoring data from 34 air toxics monitoring sites located in 16 Ohio counties have been compiled and evaluated as Ohio EPA's 2010 [All Ohio Air Toxics Report](#). Not all of the air monitors were sampled continuously during the study's 10-year term.

According to [U.S. EPA data](#), a majority of air toxics come from mobile sources – automobiles, buses, trucks, trains, boats and planes. However, there are specific areas where a single industrial source has been identified to be contributing a great deal to localized air quality issues. When this has happened, Ohio EPA has taken enforcement action and worked to reduce the problem.

Director Chris Korleski said the report takes each year's air toxics results and puts them together in a document that shows meaningful trends.

"This report allows scientists to identify specific areas of concern potentially requiring further Ohio EPA action, such as assisting with voluntary reduction efforts and compliance with new federal standards. It also helps us monitor if improvement is occurring in Ohio's urban areas."

Based on U.S. EPA risk guidelines and toxicity values for volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and heavy metals, Ohio EPA compared data from the air monitors to health-based standards. These standards estimate the number of additional cancers and other health problems associated with inhaling pollutants at various concentrations.

U.S. EPA considers a risk level of fewer than 1 in 10,000 additional cancers associated with constantly breathing an air pollutant to be within acceptable levels. While nine of the 16 counties are within the risk range deemed acceptable, seven counties have a slightly greater than 1 in 10,000 risk for additional cancers. These counties are: Columbiana, Hamilton, Jefferson, Marion, Montgomery, Scioto and Washington.

Cancer is not the only disease that breathing air pollution can cause and the study examined non-cancer-related illnesses as well. The concentrations of VOCs at three sites exhibit higher non-cancer risk levels. Heavy metal concentrations (most often manganese) at more than half of the air monitoring sites lead to an increased non-cancer health risk.

The study results are designed to provide a useful summary of ambient air quality information about air toxics compounds to the public, including academic researchers, other governmental agency and health care professionals, and Ohio EPA's pollution control partners throughout the state. While this information depicts air pollution measurements sometimes down to the neighborhood level, any individual conclusions regarding actual exposures or health impacts should be addressed by an individual's personal physician. Specific caveats and assumptions regarding interpretation of these results are explained in detail in the report.

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