

Appendix H

NYSDOH fact sheets related to soil vapor intrusion

As introduced in Section 5, fact sheets are often used to share information with the public in a variety of ways: mailed to all or part of the site's contact list, distributed at a public meeting or availability session, placed in document repositories, provided to residents during door-to-door visits, and/or included in letters transmitting sampling results.

Copies of the following fact sheets, which are commonly used to supplement discussions related to soil vapor intrusion, are provided in this appendix:

What is exposure? Information Sheet

- describes how a person may come into contact with chemicals in the environment

Soil Vapor Intrusion: Frequently Asked Questions Sheet

- describes the process referred to as "soil vapor intrusion"

PCE Fact Sheet

- provides information on tetrachloroethene (PCE) and the NYSDOH guideline for PCE in air

TCE Fact Sheet

- provides information on trichloroethene (TCE) and the NYSDOH guideline for TCE in air

Radon: Frequently Asked Questions Sheet

- provides information on this gas, commonly found in many areas of New York State, that may also migrate into buildings from the subsurface

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Length of exposure:

Short-term exposure is called **acute exposure**. Long-term exposure is called **chronic exposure**. Either may cause health effects that are immediate or health effects that occur days or years later.

Acute exposure is a short contact with a chemical. It may last a few seconds or a few hours. For example, it might take a few minutes to clean windows with ammonia, use nail polish remover or spray a can of paint. The fumes someone might inhale during these activities are examples of acute exposures.

Chronic exposure is continuous or repeated contact with a toxic substance over a long period of time (months or years). If a chemical is used every day on the job, the exposure would be chronic. Over time, some chemicals, such as PCBs and lead, can build up in the body and cause long-term health effects.

Chronic exposures can also occur at home. Some chemicals in household furniture, carpeting or cleaners can be sources of chronic exposure.



Sensitivity:

All people are not equally **sensitive** to chemicals, and are not affected by them in the same way. There are many reasons for this.

- People's bodies vary in their ability to absorb and break down or eliminate certain chemicals due to **genetic differences**.
- People may become **allergic** to a chemical after being exposed. Then they may react to very low levels of the chemical and have different or more serious health effects than nonallergic people exposed to the same amount. People who are allergic to bee venom, for example, have a more serious reaction to a bee sting than people who are not.
- Factors such as **age, illness, diet, alcohol use, pregnancy and medical or nonmedical drug use** can also affect a person's sensitivity to a chemical. Young children are often more sensitive to chemicals for a number of reasons. Their bodies are still developing and they cannot get rid of some chemicals as well as adults. Also, children absorb greater amounts of some chemicals (such as lead) into their blood than adults.

For more information:

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