

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

CDC 24/7: Saving Lives. Protecting People from Health Threats. Saving Money Through Prevention.

Environmental Health

Your environment is everything around you—the air you breathe, the water you drink, the community you live in, the places where your food is grown or prepared, your workplace, and your home. When your environment is safe and healthy, you are more likely to stay healthy. But when your environment exposes you to hazardous substances or dangerous events, your health can be negatively affected.



- In FY 2011, ATSDR worked in more than 600 American communities.
- ATSDR identified a public health hazard in about 25% of the communities.
- ATSDR's programs have stopped harmful exposures and protected public health at 76% of sites with a public health hazard.
- 87% of ATSDR's recommendations have been adopted by federal, state, and local governments, industry and community partners.

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) saves lives and protects people from environmental hazards by responding to natural and man-made disasters, working with communities in crisis from environmental threats, supporting state and city public health programs to reduce exposure to hazardous substances, educating communities, and advancing scientific knowledge. We also find how people might be exposed to hazardous substances in the environment and determine whether the exposures could harm human health. ATSDR invests in communities to improve health and save money by reducing health care costs. We strive to maximize the impact of every dollar entrusted to the agency.

ATSDR responds to communities where people might be exposed to hazardous substances in the environment. The agency has no regulatory authority, but it does determine how hazardous a site is and recommends actions to safeguard the health of community members. ATSDR works with communities, environmental groups, tribal governments and local, state and federal agencies to reduce or eliminate hazardous substances in communities to protect the public's health.

Responding to Community Environmental Concerns: ATSDR works in communities to assess human exposures at sites. Then ATSDR advises federal and state regulatory agencies and community members on actions needed to protect health. Specifically, ATSDR supports:

- Healthy places to live, work and play for the 6.9 million people who live within one mile of a site where ATSDR is currently working
- Twenty-eight states to conduct environmental health site assessment and community education programs
- A national network of more than 125 environmental public health experts in state health departments and ATSDR regional offices in communities across the nation
- Healthy land re-use and re-development decisions at the community level through technical assistance and educational efforts
- 24/7 capacity to respond to environmental health threats from natural disasters, chemical spills and other emergencies

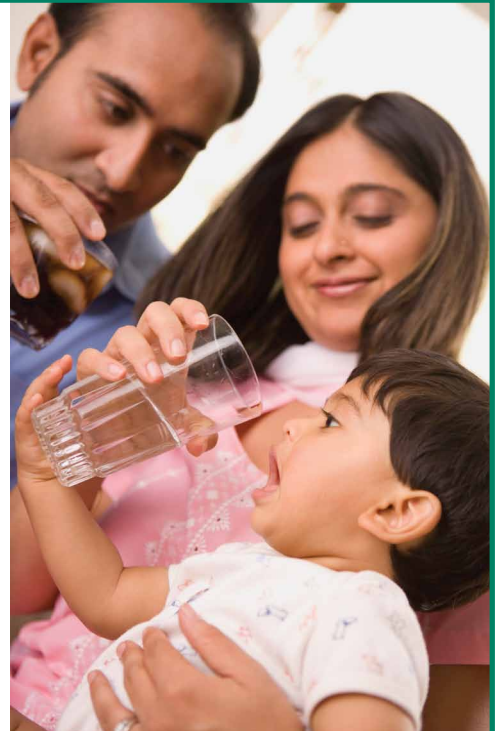
Researching and Translating Environmental Science: ATSDR's scientists answer questions about environmental exposures and provide evidence-based guidance so that health care providers and other partners can work to protect health.

- Health and environmental professionals around the world use ATSDR's suite of 172 toxicological profiles (ToxProfiles™) to make decisions about cleaning up sites, responding to emergencies, and treating people exposed to chemicals. ATSDR uses ToxProfiles™ as the basis for educational materials for community members and health providers across the country.

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- ATSDR identifies links between environmental exposures and health effects by conducting epidemiological health studies in communities across the country and by maintaining nationwide exposure and disease registries.
- Seven state partners collect data from chemical release incidents in their states. This information supports emergency response and prevention decisions that protect the health of community members.
- ATSDR's doctors and educators work to strengthen the capacity of health professionals to diagnose and treat people exposed to harmful chemicals. ATSDR funds 11 regional Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Units that provide clinical consultations about environmental exposures for health professionals, parents, caregivers and others who are seeking information and guidance.



Program Funding

Program Funding Trends: ATSDR	
Year	*Funding Level (in thousands)
FY 2010	\$99,792*
FY 2011	\$76,638
FY 2012	\$76,215

*Includes \$23 million appropriation under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act for activities in Libby, MT.

Public Health in Action: ATSDR Programs Save Lives and Protect Health

- In March 2011, ATSDR identified an urgent public health hazard in Mt. Clemens, Michigan due to explosive levels of methane in subsurface soils beneath a retirement home and low-income housing tower. Methane is the main component of natural gas that is usually used as fuel. Based on ATSDR's work, the city and state now are taking steps to eliminate the explosion hazard and to protect residents from methane vapors. This year, ATSDR worked on more than 300 similar, time-critical responses.
- By analyzing data from the national EPA and the Ohio EPA, ATSDR determined that water from nine homes in Donnelsville, Ohio contained tetrachloroethylene well above the federal maximum contaminant level. Tetrachloroethylene is a colorless liquid that is usually used for dry cleaning fabric. Based on ATSDR's evaluation, 18 residences received whole-house drinking-water treatment systems. Since 2008, ATSDR has identified harmful levels of contamination in drinking-water wells in more than 50 communities.
- After a spill of sulfolane (a chemical used in refining crude oil), in Alaska, ATSDR evaluated the potential for health effects from exposure to sulfolane in well water. ATSDR recommended an action level for sulfolane in water to guide the state health department in protecting people's health; ATSDR also provided educational materials that the state shared with health providers in the affected areas.
- ATSDR's partner, the North Carolina National Toxic Substances Incidents Program, worked with several agencies to study transportation corridors in the state to identify and reduce exposure to hazardous materials. As a result, a shipment of silicon tetrafluoride was rerouted from a two-lane road to a four-lane highway, reducing the potential for a hazardous spill and protecting neighborhood residents and surrounding businesses. Silicon tetrafluoride is a colorless, suffocating gas used in chemical analysis and to make fluorosilicic acid.