

Update for Stephen Foster Neighborhood

August 2011

Koppers Hazardous Waste Site

**Alachua CHD and Florida DOH to hold open house
to answer questions about all recent published health reports
and to collect health concerns**

About the Health Agencies

The central office of the Florida Department of Health (DOH), the DOH Alachua County Health Department (ACHD), and the US Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) work jointly to protect the public's health. We give people facts from scientific studies on toxic chemicals to help them learn how to stay safe. If we find a health threat, we make sure people who live nearby know about it right away.

About the Koppers Site

The Koppers hazardous waste site is near where Northwest 23rd Avenue and North Main Street meet in Gainesville. Since 1916, Koppers site owners treated utility poles and timber with chemicals to prevent decay. Past waste disposal caused pollution of the soil and groundwater.

In 1984, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) added the Cabot-Koppers site to the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL). Recently, EPA discovered soil contamination west of the site. Since 1989, Florida DOH reviewed environmental data, found the site a potential health risk, and recommended warning signs, further testing, and restricted site access. Residents west of Koppers in the Stephen Foster neighborhood are concerned site chemicals in the soil, indoor dust in their homes or chemicals in creek sediments might affect their health.

Please come to an Open House on Monday, August 29, 2011

at the Alachua County Health Department Auditorium

224 SE 24th Street, Gainesville

Stop by anytime at your convenience between 3:00 and 8:00 p.m.

***Come to learn more about our review of soil and sediment test results, cancer data
and other site-related information***

Please share your health concerns for us to consider in a future report

Special note:

Florida DOH has extended the public comment period until September 8

for the draft health consultation report

on the third set of residential soil sampling results

Please send them by the deadline.

(See contacts on the back of this fact sheet to send us your comments.)

Workgroup Recommends Test of Dust in Stephen Foster Neighborhood Homes

The pattern of dioxin levels found in recent tests of soil in Stephen Foster neighborhood yards suggests wind-blown dust is coming from the Koppers site. In 2010, consultants working for some residents reported the presence of dioxin-like compounds in house dust using a special test. Residents want to know if the levels of dioxins in their

homes are higher than in other area homes. They also want to know the health risks related to dioxins and how to reduce these risks.

In November 2010, the Florida DOH formed a workgroup to recommend a plan for EPA to test dust in homes near the Koppers site for dioxins. The plan also addresses how to judge the test results. At first, county, state, and federal agency staff formed the workgroup, but then in March 2011, they added community leaders and a consultant for the responsible party. On July 22, 2011, the workgroup presented its plan to EPA. EPA will decide if and how to implement the plan.

The Dust Testing Plan Recommends:

- Testing of dust samples from living spaces of homes near the Koppers site
- Comparing the levels of dioxins in these samples to background levels in other Gainesville homes
- Guidance on how to assess the health risk from dioxins in dust

The Dust Testing Plan Assumes:

The plan assumes children and adult residents accidentally swallow very small amounts of indoor dust due to normal hand to mouth actions, such as eating and smoking. We call this “incidental ingestion” since chemicals in dust can enter the body this way.

Both indoor and outdoor sources add to indoor dust. This plan recommends testing for dioxins in indoor dust samples in Stephen Foster houses. The plan also calls for sampling dust in houses that are not near the Koppers site to see what the area’s “background” levels of dioxin are. The work group expects that dust in “background” houses will still likely show low levels of dioxins from other common sources.

There are no federal or state standards for dioxins in indoor dust. The plan does not propose cleanup levels. It does not discuss how to clean up dioxin in indoor dust. EPA will make cleanup decisions in cooperation with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP).

Future Health Plans for the Florida DOH include:

- Answer questions and publish a final report on the third set of soil tests in the Stephen Foster neighborhood
- Advise EPA on the workgroup’s dust testing plan
- Review cancer records from 2000-2008 when detailed census tract data becomes available later this year
- Keep nearby residents up-to-date on any new findings

For More Information

About health and comments on the draft soil health consultation report:

- Randy Merchant, Florida Department of Health: 877-798-2772 (randy_merchant@doh.state.fl.us)
- Anthony Dennis, Alachua County Health Department: 352-334-7930 (anthony_dennis@doh.state.fl.us)

About cleanup of the site:

- Scott Miller, US Environmental Protection Agency: 404-562-9120 (miller.scott@epamail.epa.gov)

***See all seven of the Koppers health reports online at:
www.myfloridaeh.com/medicine/superfund/pha.htm
Or to get hard copies, call us toll-free at 877-798-2772
Or email us at HSEM@doh.state.fl.us
Or get them online at the ACHD website at: www.doh.state.fl.us/chdalachua/***

