



# Working for You at Hazardous Waste Sites

## **How does the Florida Department of Health protect public health around hazardous waste sites?**

The federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has a cooperative agreement with the Florida Department of Health (DOH). The Florida DOH team that works at hazardous waste sites is the **Health Assessment Team** in the **Division of Environmental Health**.

The **Health Assessment Team** consists of four scientists who evaluate environmental and health data collected from other agencies. There are two education and information specialists.

We conduct **Public Health Assessments** and inform communities and other agencies of our findings and recommendations. Health assessments look at each chemical found at or associated with a hazardous waste site and its known health effects. Some chemicals are toxic in small amounts, and other common chemicals can be toxic in large amounts.

The **DOH** team looks at the data from samples gathered by other agencies, such as the **Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)** and the **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**. We compare data from the site to national health guidelines.

## **The Health Assessment Team**

- **Conducts** public health assessments
- **Seeks input** from residents of affected communities, their concerns and questions
- **Responds** to their concerns and questions
- **Advises the public** on how to protect themselves from exposure to chemicals at a site
- **Informs communities** of our findings and recommendations concerning the site
- **Informs community** healthcare professionals of our findings, giving them helpful materials
- **Advises** cleanup agencies on health issues

## **What is a Health Assessment?**

**Florida DOH** conducts three kinds of Health Assessments.

- 1. The Public Health Assessment** is a broad look at an entire hazardous waste site—the soil, water, and air. It looks at all potential health effects from known chemicals at a site.
- 2. The Health Consultation** focuses on limited issues associated with the site. Examples include answering a specific question or reviewing special tests.
- 3. The Exposure Investigation** looks at samples from the human body, such as blood and urine, and/or the environment, like fish and garden produce. The Exposure Investigation also tells us if certain chemicals are present at harmful levels.

## **How can you get Florida DOH involved at a site near you?**

Local officials, state, and local agencies, community groups, and individuals may petition U.S. ATSDR for a health assessment. Call toll-free during business hours at (877) 798-2772 for more information on petitions.

## **Florida DOH DOES NOT**

- **Make or enforce laws or rules concerning hazardous waste**
- **Provide medical services for people exposed to hazardous waste**
- **Provide cleanup or relocation**
- **Take samples, except for some private well testing**
- **Conduct worker investigations**



### **Community Involvement, Health Assessment Team**

Division of Environmental Health, Florida Department of Health

4052 Bald Cypress Way, Bin #A-08, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1712

**(850) 245-4299** or toll free during business hours at **(877) 798-2772**

Check out our website: [www9.myflorida.com/environment/hsee/Superfund](http://www9.myflorida.com/environment/hsee/Superfund)

U.S. ATSDR provides 100% of Florida DOH Health Assessment Team funding, including the cost of this fact sheet, approximately 17 cents each.