



FACT SHEET

Hillcrest Community Environmental Investigation (HCEI)

What are Chemicals of Potential Concern?

This fact sheet answers the most frequently asked questions about different terms used in health assessments conducted by TCEQ. For more detailed information, please contact the Toxicology Division by phone (1-877-992-8370) or e-mail (tox@tceq.state.tx.us).

What are Chemicals of Potential Concern (COPC)?

A term often used to refer to chemicals that are more likely to be found at a particular facility because they are the chemicals that the facility routinely handles. This term is often used to refer to environmental contaminants.

What are VOCs?

Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are emitted as gases from certain solids or liquids. VOCs include a variety of chemicals, some of which may have short- and long-term adverse health effects. VOCs are emitted by thousands of different products such as paints and lacquers, paint strippers, cleaning supplies, pesticides, building materials and furnishings, office equipment such as copiers and printers, correction fluids and carbonless copy paper, graphics and craft materials including glues and adhesives, permanent markers, and photographic solutions¹. Some examples of VOCs are benzene, toluene, xylene, and ethylbenzene..

What is BTEX?

BTEX is a collective term used for benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, and xylene.

Where can I get more information on BTEX?

Additional information on what BTEX is and how it moves through the environment can be found at http://www.egr.msu.edu/tosc/akron/factsheets/fs_btexpdf.pdf.

What are PAHs?

A polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbon (PAH) is a compound composed entirely of carbon and hydrogen. PAHs, which form during incomplete combustion, are found everywhere in the environment. Napthalene is an example of a PAH. Examples where PAHs are found include: asphalt road, parking lots, engine exhaust, wood stove smoke, cigarette smoke, soil, and charbroiled food, coal tars, and petroleum residues²

References:

- 1. <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/voc.html> 2. Lewis' Dictionary of Toxicology. Robert A. Lewis. Lewis Publishers, Boca Raton. 1998.]