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U.S. EPA Issues California Toxic Release Data, Lead and Ammonia Among Most Common

Tuesday, December 8th, 2009.

Toxic releases into the environment from facilities operating in California decreased 21 percent in 2008 when compared to 2007, according to the latest data available from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The 12 million pound decline reflects reported decreases in air, water, and land releases and off-site transfers.

The data comes from the EPA's Toxics Release Inventory, commonly referred to as TRI. It's one of the EPA's largest publicly available databases, arming communities with valuable information on more than 650 toxic chemicals released by various industries. The chemical information in the inventory is calculated by industrial facilities and reported to the EPA, as required by law.

"We encourage people to use data from the Toxics Release Inventory in order to gain a better understanding of what is being released into their neighborhoods," said Laura Yoshii, acting EPA administrator for the Pacific Southwest region. "Industry and communities informed with accurate information can use the inventory as a starting point to find opportunities to reduce the amount of pollutants released into the air we breathe, the water we drink and the land we enjoy."

In California, 1,336 facilities reported a total of 44 million pounds of toxic chemical releases.

Total releases include toxic chemicals discharged by facilities to air, water, land, and underground, and the amount transferred off-site for disposal. Regulatory controls apply to many of the reported releases. Reporting facilities must comply with environmental standards set by local, state and federal agencies.

Here's a look at toxic releases in California from 2006 – 2008, reported in pounds:

Type of Release	Reporting Year		
	2006	2007	2008
Air	16,899,520	15,253,412	12,471,128
Land (On-site)	14,259,549	27,503,142	23,719,878
Underground Injection	50,938	69,922	104,807
Water	5,018,431	4,058,695	2,227,272
Off-site disposal	8,981,037	9,059,482	5,420,739
Total On- & Off-site releases	45,20,9475	55,944,653	43,943,824

Data from 2008 in California show:

- Total reported on-site and off -site releases decreased 21% due primarily to decreases across all media—air, water and land releases

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and off-site transfers with the exception of the increase in underground injection releases

- Air releases decreased by 18%, 2.9 million pounds
- Water releases decreased by 45%, 1.8 million pounds
- California reported an increase in underground injection releases of 50%, 34,885 pounds
- The top five released chemicals are lead, ammonia, **asbestos**, zinc compounds, and nitrate compounds
- Hazardous waste, petroleum refineries and gold ore mining account for 68% of total releases
- In California, 8 million pounds of total releases of PBT chemicals were reported, a 19% decrease or 1.9 million pounds. Lead and lead compounds top the list

Annual Toxics Release Inventory reporting began in 1987 after the enactment of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (1996). The inventory provides information to the public on annual toxic chemical releases reported by certain industrial and federal facilities. The TRI does not include data on toxic emissions from cars and trucks, nor from the majority of non-industrial sources, such as agriculture. In 2000, TRI expanded to include persistent bioaccumulative and toxic chemicals, or PBTs, at ranges from 0.1 grams to 100 pounds. PBT pollutants are toxic chemicals that remain in the environment and food chain, posing risks to human health and ecosystems.

The top facilities in California for total on-site and off-site releases of all chemicals (reported in pounds) are:

	Facility Name	City	Total Releases
1	Chemical Waste Management Inc.	Kettleman City	15,966,454
2	Western Mesquite Mines Inc.	Brawley	4,092,180
3	Clean Harbors Buttonwillow LLC	Button-Willow	1,662,201
4	Valero Refining Co. (California Benicia Refinery)	Benicia	1,611,849
5	Shell Oil Products US (Martinez Refinery)	Martinez	883,422
6	Chevron Products Co. Div. of Chevron USA Inc.	El Segundo	862,304
7	Chevron Products Co. (Richmond Refinery)	Richmond	808,729
8	Tesoro Refining & Marketing Co.	Martinez	761,889
9	Exide Technologies	Los Angeles	730,496
10	ConocoPhillips San Francisco Refinery	Rodeo	711,139

TRI Explorer

[TRI Explorer](#) is a tool that you can use to see the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) data. It allows you to look at data by state, county, or zip code; by chemical; or by industry. It provides maps that you can click on to find TRI facilities, chemicals and industries in a particular area.

National TRI Findings:

- There was a 6% decrease in total reported releases into the environment nationwide from 2007 to 2008
- The number of facilities reporting chemical releases decreased 5% nationally
- Total PBT chemical releases decreased by 2% nation-wide

For more on the TRI program including additional city, county and facility information, please visit the EPA's Web sites: <http://www.epa.gov/tri>, <http://www.epa.gov/triexplorer> and <http://www.epa.gov/enviro>.

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State fact sheets are available at: <http://www.epa.gov/region09/toxic/tri/> and <http://www.epa.gov/triexplorer/statefactsheet.htm>.

For more information on the PBT Chemicals Program, please visit the EPA's Web site at <http://www.epa.gov/opptintr/pbt>

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