Message

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Sent: 8/2/2022 6:35:55 PM
To: Bain, Andrea [Bain.Andrea@epa.gov]
CC: Chow, Alice [chow.alice@epa.gov]
BCC: Delgrosso, Karen [Delgrosso.Karen@epa.gov]
Subject: Health Leaders - B. Braun, Allentown, PA / EtO Announcement

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Dear Health Officials:

Tomorrow, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will share new information about a toxic chemical released into the air by commercial sterilization facilities and long-term cancer risk in nearby communities. The information shows that emissions of ethylene oxide (EtO) from a sterilizer in your community, B. Braun Medical Inc., may pose a risk to public health over the long term.

Exposure to high concentrations of EtO over the long-term can increase the risk of getting cancer. EPA is working with other federal agencies, state, local and Tribal governments, territories, affected communities, and industry to share information and find ways to reduce emissions from commercial sterilizers. In addition, it is important to note that EPA has studied this issue closely, gathered information from facilities, and determined, through computer modeling, that B. Braun Medical Inc. is **not** emitting EtO into the air at levels that pose short-term health risks. The risk today is no different than it was yesterday, but EPA is sharing information now so that the community can engage with EPA as solutions to long-term risks are being developed.

EtO is a colorless and flammable gas. It is typically odorless in the concentrations found outside of commercial sterilizers or in communities. EtO is released from B. Braun Medical Inc. as air pollution only. We do not have any indication, nor do we believe, that EtO is released into the water or into the ground.

EtO is used for two main purposes.

- The first is to sterilize medical equipment and sometimes spices. The US Food and Drug Administration has noted that over half of medical equipment that is sterilized for use in the United States, is sterilized with EtO. EtO has been used to sterilize medical equipment since the late 1950s.
- The second is as a "building block" to make other chemicals and products.

There are nearly 100 commercial sterilizers across the country. In late 2021, EPA conducted a risk analysis as part of an upcoming federal regulation to further reduce toxic emissions of EtO from commercial sterilizers located across the country. EPA's analysis has indicated that EtO emissions from some of these facilities are elevating cancer risks in some of the communities in which they are located. We are reaching out to those communities, as well.

What EPA is doing to address this problem?

1. **Community Outreach:**

National webinar

EPA will hold a virtual meeting for the public on August 10, 2022. We encourage community members living near commercial sterilizers to attend and participate. EPA will release a new website with maps of the sterilizer locations, along with risk information, on August 3, 2022.

Please consider participating in the community meeting to share any local health information of relevance and do share this information with your community via websites, emails, social media, etc. Registration details for the virtual August 10 National Public webinar can be accessed here: https://www.epa.gov/eto.

Allentown meeting

EPA will be hosting a community meeting for Allentown this fall to:

- Provide information about ethylene oxide and the facility, and
- Answer questions from your community members.

Please contact Terri White at white.terri-a@epa.gov for more information.

Open Dialogue

EPA encourages the public to visit https://www.epa.gov/eto for information. For additional questions about EtO, please email us at eto@epa.gov.

2. **Working with partners:** EPA is working with Pennsylvania and the facility to address this environmental risk. We will work with everyone, including local government and public health officials, to reduce the amount of EtO that is being released into the air as soon as possible. Please contact Terri White at white.terri-a@epa.gov if you have questions or would like more information. EPA has been working with John Krueger (jkrueger@pa.gov), if you want to reach out to him. We are also willing to schedule a call if you have questions.

3. **Updating the federal air pollution regulation:** EPA is updating the federal air pollution regulation that would further reduce EtO emissions from commercial sterilizers, including B. Braun Medical Inc. There will be an opportunity for you and the residents of your community to participate in the development of the regulation later this year. The public will be able to comment both in writing and during a public hearing. The public comment period for an air pollution regulation like this one is typically 60-90 days. Regulations often take about a year to become final once the public comment period closes. Once a regulation is final, facilities typically have up to 3 years to comply with the regulation.

For more information, please visit https://www.epa.gov/hazardous-air-pollutants-ethylene-oxide.

In addition, if you have questions, please send them to eto@epa.gov or Terri White at white.terri-a@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

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