

EPA's Ongoing Work in La Place, Louisiana

Why EPA is Involved:

- As a part of EPA's mission to protect human health and the environment, we have been completing work near the community surrounding the Denka Performance Elastomer facility in La Place, LA.
- EPA's work in La Place began after the National Air Toxics Assessment was released in 2015. This report indicated that chloroprene being released from the Denka facility could potentially lead to increased cancer risks in the surrounding community.

About Chloroprene:

- Chloroprene is a chemical used to make Neoprene and some other similar synthetic rubbers that are chemical and weather resistant.
- In 2010, EPA classified chloroprene as a likely human carcinogen.
- People are exposed to chloroprene primarily by breathing it in.
- The Denka facility is the only facility that produces chloroprene in the United States.

What EPA Has Done So Far:

- In May 2016, EPA began monitoring ambient air for chloroprene in six locations in the community.
- EPA continues to coordinate with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, the local community, and the Denka facility.
- In September 2020, EPA concluded its community monitoring program, having collected over 2,500 air samples from May 2016 through September 2020. The summarization of the data is found here: <https://www.epa.gov/la/denka-air-monitoring-data-summary>.

Initial Progress:

- Control Measures: Denka has implemented several control measures at the plant under an agreement with the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality.
- Reductions in Chloroprene: The results of EPA's ambient air monitoring taken since these control measures were implemented show substantial reductions in chloroprene in ambient air at all six monitoring sites.

New Monitoring System Needed:

- While chloroprene levels in ambient air were substantially reduced, data indicated periodic spikes were still occurring.
- The initial air monitors took samples on a regular, but periodic, basis, capturing 24-hour averages of chloroprene in the air. This limited EPA's ability to pinpoint when spikes were occurring, how often they were occurring, and exactly how large the spikes were.

A Goal to Further Reduce Chloroprene Emissions:

- In March 2020, EPA implemented an air monitoring system using SPods.
- SPods are monitors that are triggered to collect a sample when a "spike" (high short-term concentration) occurs. They measure concentrations of chloroprene only when a spike occurs, which can help to identify sources within the facility.
- Results from the SPods will allow the EPA to increase our knowledge about chloroprene spikes.
- In August 2023, the EPA concluded its continuous monitoring program using the six SPod monitoring stations, having collected over 748 air samples from March 2020 through August 2023. The summary of the data is found here: <https://www.epa.gov/la/denka-air-monitoring-data-summary>
- With this increased information about chloroprene spikes, EPA's goal is to identify actions that the Denka facility can take to further reduce chloroprene emissions and lower the amount of chloroprene in the community.