

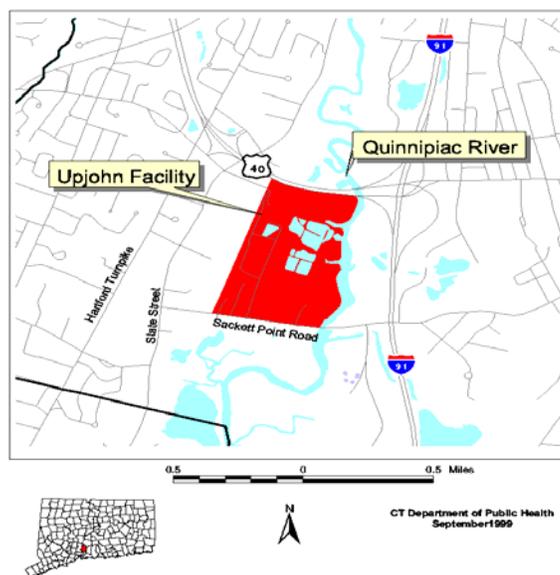
UPJOHN CHEMICAL CO. SITE

NORTH HAVEN, CT

This fact sheet summarizes the findings of the Public Health Assessment document for the Upjohn Chemical Company site in North Haven. The document was produced by the Connecticut Department of Public Health (CT DPH), Division of Environmental Epidemiology and Occupational Health. A Public Health Assessment reviews available information about hazardous substances at a site and evaluates whether exposure to them might cause any harm to people. For copies of the document, contact the CT DPH at the address and phone number below.

SITE BACKGROUND

The Upjohn Company operated the North Haven Fine Chemical (NHFC) plant in North Haven from 1962 to 1993. From the mid-1940's through 1962, the Carwin Company operated the NHFC plant. The Upjohn Company still maintains ownership of the facility. The Upjohn site is approximately 162 acres. The site is bordered by the Quinnipiac River to the east, railroad tracts to the west, Connecticut Route 40 to the north, and Sackett Point Drive to the south. All buildings except an administration building have been demolished. Most of the Upjohn facility is covered with asphalt. The facility manufactured chemical compounds used as raw materials in industries for domestic dyestuff and pigment manufacturers.



UPJOHN SITE

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTAMINATION

Environmental samples of air, water, and soil have been collected to determine the extent of environmental contamination. While groundwater and soils on site are contaminated, past releases of benzene from air emissions are the main health concern. Although air sampling was not taken on a regular basis, elevated levels of benzene were measured by an EPA mobile van in the neighborhood around the facility in 1989. In addition, there was an accidental release of benzene in 1988.

There are no public water supply wells in the Upjohn site area. Private wells in the area near the Upjohn site were sampled in 1979 and 1982, and found to be potable. Currently, there are no residents in the Upjohn area using a private well for drinking water.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Citizens have expressed concern about bladder cancer in the residential community around the facility. These concerns were further increased when a 1995 occupational study of former NHFC workers found a strong association between working at the facility and developing bladder cancer. It is important to understand that Upjohn workers were most likely exposed to much higher levels of contaminants over many years on a day to day basis. Area residents near the site were exposed to far lower contaminant levels. It is also important to know that exposure to the site contaminants does not automatically mean one will become sick.

Based on the information reviewed, the CT DPH has concluded that this site represented a public health hazard in the past due to air exposures from the Upjohn NHFC facility. This conclusion was based on limited data and information. The site is not a public health hazard now because there are no ongoing exposures to air emissions or other environmental media. Exposures from production at the NHFC facility ended in 1993.

WHAT FURTHER HEALTH ACTIVITIES WILL BE CONDUCTED?

Because exposure to benzene can cause cancer - and some exposure to benzene outside the facility has been documented - an analysis of bladder cancer and leukemia will be conducted in the North Haven area. The analysis will evaluate whether people living closer to the site and therefore more likely to have been exposed to benzene have a higher rate of these cancers than people not likely to have been exposed.

The analysis will not determine if the cancers were caused by the NHFC facility. It will provide an overview of cancer incidence (bladder and leukemia) and proximity to the NHFC facility in North Haven. Results from this analysis will not be able to establish "cause and effect," but will be useful in determining whether more detailed studies are appropriate.

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