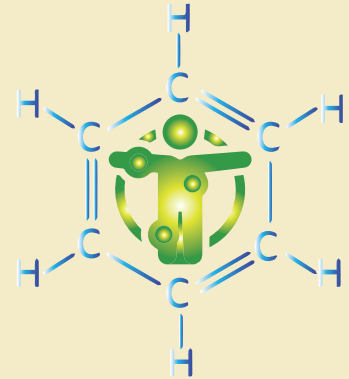


Deer Park Fire: Air Quality What You Need to Know

This fact sheet summarizes the information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) and Harris County Homeland Security & Emergency Management. For additional information regarding Benzene exposure, contact the CDC Information Center at **1-800-232-4636**.

1. What is Benzene?

- Benzene is a colorless or light yellow, sweet-smelling chemical that is highly flammable.
- Benzene evaporates into the air very quickly and is a vapor that is heavier than air which causes it to sink into low-lying areas.
- Benzene dissolves only slightly in water and will float on top of water.



2. Signs and Symptoms of Exposure

If you believe that you have been exposed to high levels of benzene you may develop the following signs and symptoms within minutes to several hours after exposure:

- Drowsiness
- Dizziness
- Rapid or irregular heartbeat
- Headaches
- Tremors
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness
- Death (at very high levels)
- Direct exposure of the eyes, skin, or lungs to benzene can cause tissue injury and irritation.

Contact your healthcare provider if you feel you or a loved one are experiencing any related symptoms. For any emergency situations call 9-1-1.

You may also contact the [Ask My Nurse](#) hotline by @harrishealthsystem if you have questions about any signs and symptoms. They are open 8 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. seven days a week at 713-634-1110.

3. How do I protect myself and limit exposure?

- Reduce exposure as much as possible by removing any clothing that has been exposed to Benzene, moving away from area of exposure, and bathing.
- Bring your family and pets inside.
- Minimize indoor exposure by creating a shelter-in-place:
 - Lock doors, close windows, air vents, and fireplace dampers.
 - Turn off fans, air conditioning and forced air heating systems.
 - Go into an interior room with few windows, if possible.
 - Seal all windows, doors and air vents with 2-4 mil. thick plastic sheeting and duct tape. Cut the plastic sheeting several inches wider than the openings and label each sheet. Duct tape plastic at corners first and then tape down all edges.
 - Be prepared to improvise and use what you have on hand to seal gaps so that you create a barrier between yourself and any contamination.

4. What do I do if our school has been exposed?

- Check school district's Emergency Operating Procedures (EOP).
- More information regarding evacuation and sheltering in place can be found on the CDC website: www.emergency.cdc.gov/planning/evacuationfacts.asp

5. Resources:

For Schools

- For updates on air quality please visit:
www.readyharris.org/Deer-Park-Fire
- Health Information: www.publichealth.harriscountytexas.gov/
- Air Quality Information: www.cjo.harriscountytexas.gov/
- Fixed Air Monitoring Sites: www.tceq.texas.gov/

For Emergency Management

- For information and updates on school closures, please visit your district's or school's website or social media accounts. Additional information on closures may be provided by local TV or radio stations.
- Stay in touch
 - Communicate with your emergency contact.
 - Use your phone only as necessary to report life threatening emergency. Otherwise, limit phone use to provide lines available for emergency responders.
 - Continue listening to radio, television, or phone for updates.

6. Mental Health Resources

- Talk to someone you trust if you're feeling stress or anxious. Or you can contact the National Distress Line offers 24/7 emotional support. Call [1-800-985-5990](tel:1-800-985-5990) or text TalkWithUs to 66746.

