



County of Santa Cruz



HEALTH SERVICES AGENCY
Public Health Division

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PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

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| To: | Santa Cruz County Healthcare Providers |
| From: | Lisa B. Hernandez, MD, MPH, County Health Officer |
| Subject: | Guidance for Health Concerns Related to the Moss Landing Vistra Power Plant Fire |
| Date: | February 18, 2025 |

Situational Update

On January 16, 2025, a lithium-ion battery fire broke out at the Moss Landing Vistra Power Plant. Smoke was visibly emitting from the facility from January 16 through January 19. Early air monitoring data by the US EPA indicated that levels of hydrogen fluoride gas did not exceed air quality standards outside of the facility’s perimeter during the fire. Monterey Bay Air Quality District (MBARD) particulate matter monitoring sensors near Moss Landing in Castroville, Watsonville, Prunedale, and Aromas showed good to moderate air quality during the fire.

On January 24, 2025, the County of Monterey Health Department’s Environmental Health Bureau (EHB) collected water samples from the Moss Landing area. The reported levels for manganese, copper, aluminum and nickel in the samples did not exceed the associated regulatory maximum contaminant level (MCL) or Public Health Goal (PHG) for drinking water. The California Department of Toxic Substances Control also collected water and soil samples on January 24th and a health risk assessment by the California Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Environmental Health Hazards Assessment is pending.

Santa Cruz County Environmental Health and the Agricultural Commissioner are in the process of conducting additional testing of agricultural products and will collaborate with State agencies to assess health risks of any detected metals.

While progress is being made by multiple agencies on additional air, soil, and water testing to better characterize what, if any, exposures may have occurred, patients may have ongoing questions and concerns about their health.

ACTIONS REQUESTED OF HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

- Take a detailed risk history.
 - Patients presenting with symptoms possibly related to exposure to contaminated air, water, and/or soil should be evaluated with a thorough history and physical.
 - History should include all pertinent details of symptoms onset and evolution.
 - Ingesting, breathing, and/or having skin or mucous membrane contact with heavy metal dusts and other particulate matter from smoke may result in symptoms such as itchy rash, watery eyes, runny nose, metallic taste in mouth, sore throat, and difficulty

- breathing, as well as exacerbation of underlying medical conditions like asthma and COPD.
 - Providers may consider using ICD10 codes "Z77.110" for contact with and (suspected) exposure to air pollution, "Z77.111" for water pollution, and "Z77.112" for soil pollution.
- Management should be guided by the clinical evaluation.
 - Treatment should be supportive and symptom based.
 - Testing for heavy metals like cobalt, copper, manganese, and lithium is generally not clinically useful. These tests cannot predict whether a person will experience health effects or determine if current health symptoms are related to exposures. However, should a medical provider wish to order such testing, tests for nickel, cobalt, and manganese levels must be ordered individually because they are not usually included in commercial laboratories' standard "heavy metals" panel. Providers can check individual laboratories for more information.
 - Consider lead testing as part of clinically-indicated routine screenings.
 - Environmental cleaning in and around the home may be beneficial for individuals with ongoing symptoms.
 - Patients can engage deep cleaning services to remove fine dusts and debris that may not be visible to the eye but are causing or exacerbating symptoms.
- Report symptoms consistent with smoke or other potential toxin exposure to Santa Cruz County Public Health via the [Confidential Morbidity Report \(CMR\)](#) under the category 'Other/Unusual Disease'
 - Fax Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) to (831) 454-5049 **OR**
 - Submit electronically through CalREDIE. Your facility may have a designated individual who submits these reports, or you can submit directly through the Provider Portal
 - Create CalREDIE Provider account [HERE](#)
- For clinical consultation or questions about reporting:
 - Weekdays 8 AM-5 PM: call the Communicable Disease Unit (CDU) at (831) 454-4114
 - Holidays/outside business hours: call (831) 471-1170 and ask to speak to the health official on call
 - Email: HSACD@santacruzcountyca.gov
 - To speak with a poison information provider or physician specializing in poisoning care, call 1-800-222-1222. Services are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [Monterey County 2025 Moss Landing Vistra Power Plant Power Information Page](#)
- [California Department of Public Health Wildfire Toolkit](#)
- [Monterey Bay Air Resources District](#)
- [Sign up for CruzAware](#), Santa Cruz County's emergency and non-emergency alert and warning system.

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.