



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Subject: TOXICS STEERING GROUP

Number: 09-006

Date: August 20, 2012

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Category:  Internal/Administrative  External/Non-Interpretive  External/Interpretive

*A Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Policy and Procedure cannot establish regulatory requirements for parties outside of the DEQ. This document provides direction to DEQ staff regarding the implementation of rules and laws administered by the DEQ. It is merely explanatory; does not affect the rights of, or procedures and practices available to, the public; and does not have the force and effect of law.*

**ISSUE:**

The DEQ administers chemical contaminant criteria developed for the protection of human health, safety, welfare, and the environment. The DEQ endeavors to incorporate the best-available science in the development and review of these criteria. Human health, safety, welfare, and environmental risk assessment issues encountered in these efforts may have department-wide implications, and any decisions made concerning these issues may have impacts in several programmatic areas. Human health-related issues of particular concern include, but are not limited to, protection of children's health, and assessment of the risks associated with exposures to chemical mixtures.

**DEFINITIONS:**

**Chemical mixture:** Two or more chemical substances that may jointly contribute to toxicity in the exposed population.

**Consensus recommendation:** The collective opinion that represents the majority of the participants involved in the process.

**Exposure assessment:** The determination or estimation (qualitative or quantitative) of the magnitude, frequency, duration, and route of exposure. Exposure assessment may consider past, present, and future exposures.

**Hazard assessment:** The process of determining whether exposure to a chemical or chemical mixture can cause an increase in the incidence of a particular adverse health effect (e.g., cancer, birth defects) and whether the adverse effect is likely to occur in humans or environmental organisms.

**Risk assessment:** The determination of potential adverse health effects from exposure to chemicals, including both qualitative and quantitative expressions of risk.

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**POLICY:**

The Toxics Steering Group (TSG) is the DEQ’s forum for discussion of human health risk assessment issues related to the exposure to chemical contaminants in environmental media. Members of the TSG are risk assessors, toxicologists within the DEQ, and toxicologists from other state agencies—the Department of Community Health (DCH) and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) specifically—and other related state experts. The TSG will meet approximately twice per year, or more if needed, with the goal of using the best-available science to address human health and risk assessment issues identified by the TSG or DEQ management. Discussions and decisions by the TSG will foster and facilitate consistency of risk assessment practices and minimize the duplication of effort within the DEQ and amongst the state agencies. Following discussions of, and research into, a particular issue, the TSG will formulate consensus recommendations which will be distributed as appropriate.

**PROCEDURES:**

Step	Who	Does What
A1.	TSG	<p>The TSG monitors and evaluates the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s and other federal agencies’ efforts in the area of children’s health, reviews the latest scientific literature and general risk assessment issues, and makes recommendations relative to the DEQ’s environmental criteria affecting children’s health, which incorporate the best available science.</p> <p>Monitors approaches that address concepts of mixtures, multiple media exposures, and cumulative risks and makes recommendations to incorporate these concepts into the regulatory risk assessment process.</p> <p>Provides a forum for consideration of factors used to develop cleanup criteria, screening levels, and other environmental quality criteria for the protection of human health, safety, welfare, and the environment.</p> <p>Provides a forum for review, opinion exchange, and discussion on new and innovative approaches for conducting hazard, exposure, and risk assessments.</p> <p>Provides a mechanism for seeking and receiving outside expert input on human health risk assessment issues and other scientific and technical issues identified by the members' state agencies.</p> <p>Provides a mechanism to address other scientific and technical issues related to hazard, exposure, and risk assessments.</p>

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Step	Who	Does What
A2.	TSG Member	<p>A TSG member is a DEQ toxicologist or a toxicologist, epidemiologist, or other appropriate risk assessment technical staff who may be identified by another State of Michigan department (e.g., DCH or DARD).</p> <p>Participates in reaching a consensus position on scientific and technical issues under consideration.</p> <p>May request a TSG discussion on a scientific issue that is pertinent to the work of the TSG or its individual members.</p> <p>May recommend the formation of a subcommittee.</p>
A3.	Supervisor of TSG Member	<p>Ensures that his/her DEQ division or other State of Michigan department is represented at all TSG meetings to the extent possible.</p> <p>Provides at least one subcommittee member if his/her division might be impacted by the subcommittee's findings.</p> <p>Ensures that any subcommittee member provided by him/her completes subcommittee assignments by the due dates.</p>
A4.	TSG Chairperson	<p>A TSG chairperson is a senior DEQ toxicologist (12 level or higher), who is available for one year. This position rotates annually.</p> <p>Schedules TSG meetings, arranges meeting facilities, and provides meeting agendas.</p> <p>Coordinates the production of TSG meeting summaries and placement of them on the Internet via the DEQ home page.</p> <p>Distributes TSG meeting summaries to all members, the DEQ director, the DEQ deputy director, the director of the Office of the Great Lakes, the DEQ division chiefs, and the designated deputy directors for other participating state departments. Meeting summaries will also be distributed to outside experts who participate in TSG meetings.</p> <p>Coordinates written documentation of TSG recommendations and findings, and such documentation as necessary to support the findings, and provides it directly to the DEQ deputy director overseeing the TSG.</p> <p>Coordinates written characterization of any policy-related questions and forwards it to the DEQ deputy director and the appropriate DEQ division chiefs for management consideration and direction.</p> <p>Reports annually the TSG's progress on children's health and other</p>

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		risk assessment issues, through the DEQ deputy director overseeing the TSG, to the DEQ director by March 1 of each year. The report will identify accomplishments of the previous year, identify current issues, and make recommendations to the DEQ director related to children's health and risk assessment.
A5.	Subcommittee	<p>A TSG subcommittee is composed of members and examines highly technical issues that affect multiple divisions. Any DEQ toxicologist may chair a subcommittee.</p> <p>A TSG subcommittee is formed after a supervisor of a member sends a written proposal to supervisor(s) of other proposed subcommittee member(s) stating the purpose, scope of work, and estimated time line for completion of specified tasks. The supervisors of all members whose divisions might be impacted by the subcommittee's findings must agree that a subcommittee needs to be created before a subcommittee exists.</p>
A6.	Outside Expert	<p>An outside expert is invited by a consensus of members to participate in discussion on a specific technical issue as needed.</p> <p>Has appropriate formal training and professional experience in a scientific field relevant to the issue under discussion.</p> <p>Provides presentations, written material, and expert advice on scientific and technical issues to the TSG.</p>
A7.	DEQ Deputy Director	<p>The DEQ deputy director is assigned by the DEQ director to direct the TSG.</p> <p>Receives and facilitates implementation of all recommendations and findings of the TSG as appropriate.</p> <p>May request TSG discussion on a scientific issue that is pertinent to the work of the TSG.</p>
A8.	DEQ Division Chief	A DEQ division chief may request TSG discussion on a scientific issue that is pertinent to the work of the TSG.

Approved:

  
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 Dan Wyant, Director