

Flat Rock, Michigan Area Investigation FAQ

Background (as of 9/4/2021)

- On August 31, 2021, a report first came into the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services regarding a potential release of an unknown chemical into the sewer.
- Ongoing air sampling has identified elevated levels of Total Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), and specifically benzene, at additional locations and in the sanitary sewer system in Flat Rock, Michigan.
- Ford Motor Company has stated that the Flat Rock Assembly Plant identified a gasoline leak on Wednesday that is a likely source of contamination in Flat Rock.
- The City of Flat Rock, the Wayne County Health Department, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE), the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) responded to investigate and address these concerns.
- The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Wayne County Health Department are recommending residents of the Flat Rock area bounded by I-75 to the east, Gibraltar Road to the north, Cahill Road to the west and Woodruff Road to the south evacuate their homes until further notice due to the potential risks caused by fumes from a gasoline leak from a storage tank at the Ford Motor Co.'s Flat Rock Assembly Plant. (See map attached.)
- In addition to the smaller geographic area described above, there is a broader area of Flat Rock under investigation for potential exposure. This area is bounded by Gibraltar Road to the north, Sheeks Road to the west, East Huron River Drive to the south, and Tamarack Road to the East, as well as buildings along Woodruff between East Huron River Drive and Cahill Road. (See map attached.)
- Response teams will go door-to-door beginning Saturday, Sept. 4, in affected areas to ensure residents are informed and receive quick and accurate information about evacuation.



What is benzene?

Benzene is a flammable and colorless liquid with a sweet odor. It is used to make other chemicals. It is one of the most commonly made chemicals in the United States. It is found in crude oil, gasoline, tobacco smoke, and a variety of other products. It floats on water and evaporates into the air very easily; however, it is heavier than air, so it could potentially stay in low-lying parts of homes and basements.

How do I know if my home is being affected by benzene?



While benzene can be smelled at very high levels, it can harm health at levels below what can be smelled. With limited resources not all homes can be tested immediately. It is recommended you evacuate until further information is available. If you have concerns about your health, MDHHS recommends that you evacuate until further information is available. If you have questions about this recommendation, please contact MDHHS at 800-648-6942.

Flat Rock Area Investigation FAQ (continued)

How can benzene affect my health?



Breathing in higher levels of benzene can affect people in a variety of ways. Some people may feel sleepy or dizzy. Others may get headaches. Benzene can also cause nausea, vomiting or a rapid heart rate. Long-term exposures to lower levels or short-term exposure to higher levels of benzene may increase risk of cancer and is linked to problems in the blood and immune systems. Having one of the health problems listed here does not mean you have been exposed to benzene.

Should I continue to breastfeed my child?



If you are breastfeeding, please contact your health care provider right away to discuss your exposure risks and next steps. If you have been exposed to benzene and other VOCs in gasoline, they may be in your breast milk.

Should I be tested for benzene or other VOCs?



Benzene quickly leaves your body once exposure is stopped. Although the levels were high in some locations, the time of exposure was relatively short. A test of your blood, breath, or urine will not be able to tell you how much benzene you were exposed to. Please talk to your health care provider to discuss any health concerns.

What are the other risks of having benzene or other VOCs in the air?



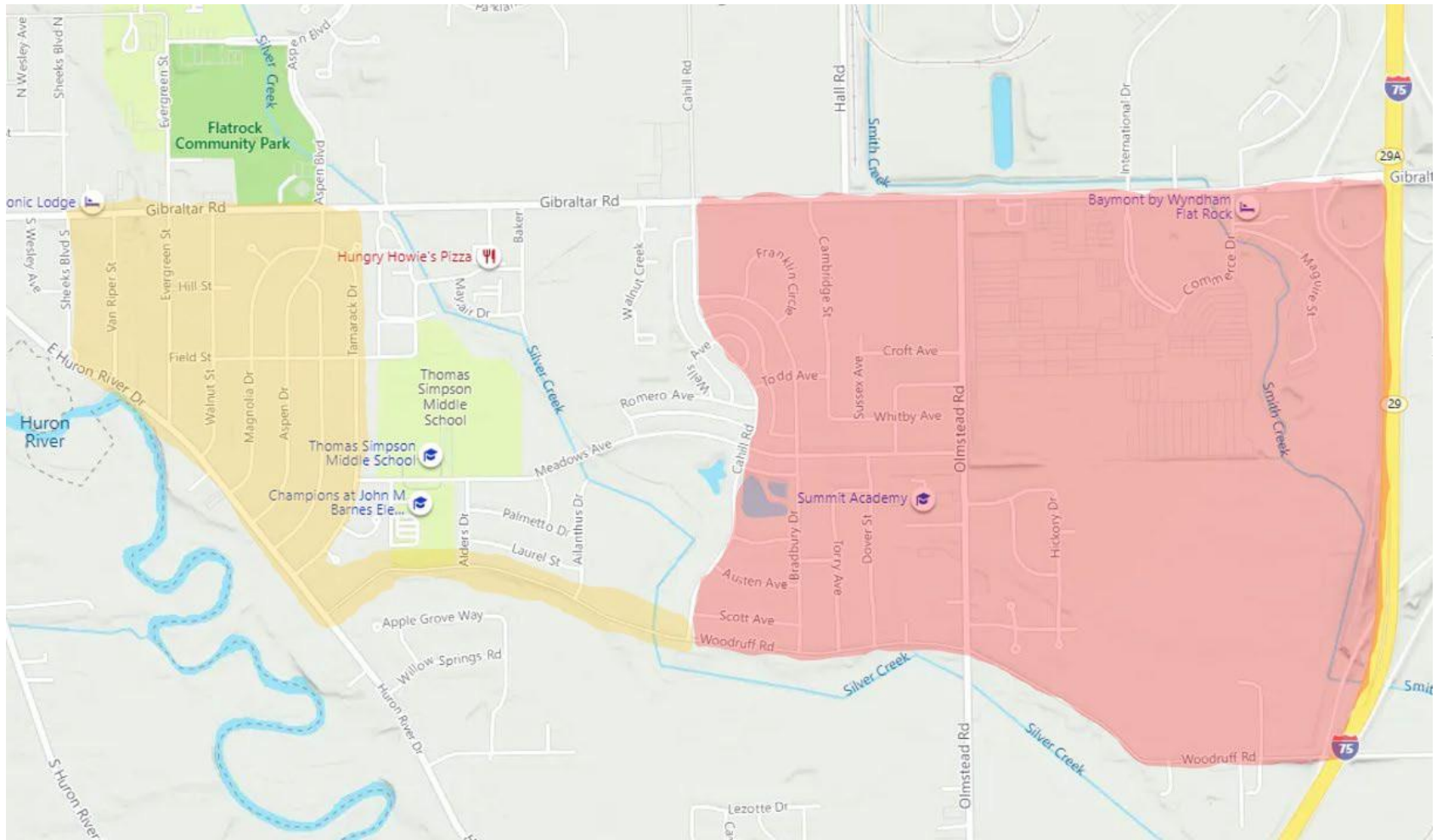
Benzene and other chemicals found in gasoline are highly flammable and can explode if levels are high enough. Porous materials in the home could retain and off-gas chemicals for some time after the event if levels are high enough in the home. Foods in sealed containers or stored in the refrigerator are unlikely to be impacted by these vapors.

Questions and Concerns



If you smell a gasoline odor in or around your home or business, move to fresh air and call 911. If you have any of the health issues described above, leave your home or business immediately, move to fresh air. If you need medical assistance, contact your health care provider or call 911 if you're experiencing a medical emergency. If you have questions about evacuation or other non-odor concerns, please call 211.

If you have questions about benzene and your health, please contact the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services' Division of Environmental Health at 800-648-6942.



Zone 1



Zone 2