

**ASSESSMENT OF CITY OF MIDLAND RESIDENTS' OPINIONS  
REGARDING A DIOXIN EXPOSURE INVESTIGATION**

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Michigan Department of Community Health  
3423 N. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd.  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

## INTRODUCTION

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) in cooperation with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is conducting a Public Health Assessment (PHA) of dioxin contamination in the city of Midland.

Elevated dioxin levels have been found in soil. It is not known if people have been exposed to or absorbed dioxins into their bodies. An Exposure Investigation, in which samples of soil, dust, and blood serum would be analyzed for dioxins, would provide information to answer these questions.

The MDCH conducted this needs assessment to determine if residents of the city of Midland:

- want an exposure investigation,
- who they would like to conduct it,
- who they think should pay for it,
- and are willing to allow their soil, household dust, and blood to be sampled.

MDCH mailed five hundred needs assessments to randomly selected Midland addresses on February 9, 2004. 114 (22.8%) were completed and returned to the MDCH, 68 (13.6%) were returned from the U.S. Postal Service as undeliverable, and 318 (63.6%) were not returned. The response rates shown below may not equal 100% because not all respondents provided answers to all questions.

## SUMMARY OF COMMUNITY RESPONSES

### Section 1: Opinion Questions 1-5

**Question 1. Should an investigation be conducted to compare dioxin levels in the blood of people who live in the city of Midland to another community where dioxin levels in soil are not elevated?**

Yes	64%
No	33%

**Question 2: Who do you think should conduct the investigation?\***

State of Michigan (MDCH and MDEQ)	29%
ATSDR and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)	38%
The Dow Chemical Company	6%
An academic university	18%
Other	5%

\*Only those selecting "YES" for question one were allowed to provide answers on question two.

**Question 3. Who do you think should pay for the investigation?\***

The State of Michigan	18%
ATSDR & CDC	24%
The Dow Chemical Company	48%
Other	4%

\*Only those selecting "YES" for question one were allowed to provide answers on question three.

**Question 4. Participants in the investigation will be asked to give an 80-milliliter (about 3 ounces) sample of their blood. Would you be willing to give a blood sample?\***

Yes	90%
No	8%
No Response	1%

\* Only those selecting "YES" for question one were allowed to provide answers on question four.

**Question 5. Would you be willing to let the MDEQ and the MDCH sample the soil in your yard and/or the dust in your home to find out if it contains elevated levels of dioxin? \***

Yes	96%
No	1%
No Response	3%

Only those selecting "YES" for question one were allowed to provide answers on question five.

**Section 2: Descriptive Questions of Respondents.**

**Question 6. How long have you lived in the city of Midland?**

Less than 1 year	1%
1 to 5 years	22%
6 to 10 years	15%
11 to 20 years	17%
21 to 30 years	17%
More than 30 years	23%
No Response	3%

**Question 7. Are you male or female?**

Male	47%
Female	50%

No Response 3%

**Question 8. What is your age?**

Less than 20 years old	4%
21 to 35 years old	22%
36 to 50 years old	30%
51 to 70 years old	30%
Greater than 71 years old	11%
No Response	2%

**Question 9. Do you have children under 12 years old living at home?**

Yes 28%

**Question 10. Do you or your spouse work for Dow Chemical Company?**

Currently working or retired from Dow Chemical 11%

**Question 11. Are you or a family member a plaintiff in the lawsuit against Dow?**

No respondents reported being plaintiffs.

**SUMMARY**

A total of 114 surveys were returned to MDCH from a wide range of adults based on age, length of time at their residence, and gender. Sixty-four percent of respondents supported the idea of an exposure investigation being conducted. Of those in favor of an investigation, 67% selected government agencies to conduct the investigation. Forty-eight percent of the respondents indicated that the Dow Chemical Company should pay for the exposure investigation. Forty-one percent of the respondents indicated that a government agency should pay for the exposure investigation. The vast majority (90 to 96%) of the respondents favored testing of their soil, house dust and/or blood.

For more details, please contact: Kory Groetsch or Linda Dykema at 1-800-648-6942.