

**ASSESSMENT OF TITTABAWASSEE RIVER FLOOD PLAIN
RESIDENTS' OPINIONS REGARDING A DIOXIN EXPOSURE
INVESTIGATION**

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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 Tittabawassee River flood plain.

Elevated dioxin levels have been found in soil and in river sediments. 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 living in the flood plain of the Tittabawassee River:

- 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.

The MDCH mailed five hundred needs assessments to randomly selected Tittabawassee River flood plain addresses on February 9, 2004. 186 (37.2%) were completed and returned to the MDCH, 28 (5.6%) were returned from the U.S. Postal Service as undeliverable, and 268 (57.2%) 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 flood plain of the Tittabawassee River to another community where dioxin levels in soil are not elevated?

Yes	84.4%
No	8.6%

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

State of Michigan (MDCH and MDEQ)	38.6%
ATSDR and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)	39.5%
The Dow Chemical Company	5.7%
An academic university	10.5%
Other	5.3%

*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	14.9%
ATSDR & CDC	14.4%
The Dow Chemical Company	61.5%
Other	8.2%

*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	87.3%
No	8.9%
No Response	3.8%

* 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 you home to find out if it contains elevated levels of dioxin?*

Yes	95.5%
No	4.5%
No Response	0%

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 at your current residence?

Less than 1 year	0.5%
1 to 5 years	12.9%
6 to 10 years	20.4%
11 to 20 years	22%
21 to 30 years	18.8%
More than 30 years	25.2%
No Response	0.5%

Question 7. Are you male or female?

Male	54.1%
Female	45.2%
No Response	0.5%

Seven surveys were completed by couples that marked both “male” and “female”.

Question 8. What is your age?

Less than 20 years old	0.5%
21 to 35 years old	7%
36 to 50 years old	32.3%
51 to 70 years old	43.5%
Greater than 71 years old	16.1%
No Response	0.5%

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

Yes	19.4%
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Question 10. Do you or your spouse work for Dow Chemical Company?

Currently working or retired from Dow Chemical	1%
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Question 11. Are you or a family member a plaintiff in the lawsuit against Dow?

Yes	14.5%
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SUMMARY

A total of 186 surveys were returned to MDCH from a wide range of adults based on age, length of time at their residence, and gender. Most people (84.4%) supported the idea of an exposure investigation being conducted. Of those in favor of an investigation, 79% selected government agencies to conduct the investigation. Sixty-one percent of the respondents indicated that the Dow Chemical Company should pay for the exposure investigation. Twenty-nine percent of the respondents indicated that a government agency should pay for the exposure investigation. The vast majority (87 to 95.5%) 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.