ALISO CANYON GAS LEAK

Health Fact Sheet

Overview

This fact sheet provides information about the natural gas leak at the Aliso Canyon Storage Facility and its related health impacts to Porter Ranch residents. The natural gas leak began on October 23. The Department of Public Health (Public Health) determined that the emissions from this facility are causing health effects in some individuals in the Porter Ranch community. Exposures to these chemicals are generally not expected to lead to permanent or long-term health problems. However, short-term, recurrent symptoms may occur with these exposures as long as the odors persist, and some individuals may be more sensitive than others. Outdoor air is being monitored and, Public Health will continue to assess air quality until the gas leak is resolved.

Natural Gas

Natural gas in California is primarily composed of methane. Because natural gas is odorless by itself, trace amounts of odorants called Mercaptans are added so that a gas leak is easy to detect. Southern California Gas Company uses an odorant called Scentinel® T-50, which contains two ingredients, tetrahydrothiophene (THT) and t-butyl mercaptan. These gases have strong odors, even at very low air concentrations.

Health Effects

Methane: Methane is an odorless gas, and the primary health hazard associated with methane is its flammability. Methane inhalation in this setting generally does not lead to health effects. Methane level readings in Porter Ranch are substantially lower than flammable limits, and do not pose a health concern to residents in the area.

Mercaptans*:* At this time, the natural gas leak is releasing very low levels of mercaptans into the air. Mercaptans have a strong "rotten-egg," "garlicky," or "skunk-like" odor and can be irritating to the eyes, skin, and respiratory system at low levels. In this incident, the levels are so low they can escape detection by most monitoring equipment, however individuals are capable of detecting these odors. These low level exposures may cause eye, nose and throat irritation, coughing and nasal congestion, shortness of breath, nausea, stomach discomfort, dizziness, and headaches. Symptoms vary depending on the frequency and duration of the odor and will generally go away once the odor exposure has stopped. Odors are not associated with long-term health effects, but they may cause recurrent symptoms on a daily basis in some individuals as long as the odors remain.

Public Health Directive to Southern California Gas Company

If you are experiencing odors and symptoms AND you wish to be temporarily relocated from your home, Southern California Gas Company is offering free temporary relocation for any individuals, families, and pets.

Relocation is not mandatory. To learn more about relocation assistance, call **877-238-9555.**
If you or your health care provider have health-related questions, please call Dr. Cyrus Rangan, Director of the Bureau of Toxicology and Environmental Assessment, at 213-738-3220.

For More Information

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health, 888-700-9995
South Coast Air Quality Management District, 800-CUT-SMOG
Los Angeles County Fire Department, 323-881-2411
Southern California Gas Company, 877-238-9555