

Questions & Answers from the View-Master Public Meeting Held on January 28, 2003



Original release date: April 2, 2003. Revised Sept. 16, 2003.

This document contains responses to questions that were gathered at the public meeting that Oregon DHS held with former View-Master workers and concerned citizens on January 28, 2003, at the Elmonica School in Beaverton.

To develop answers, these questions were referred to several different agencies, including the Office of Environmental and Occupational Epidemiology of Oregon DHS, the Office of Environmental Services and Consultation of Oregon DHS, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, Oregon Drinking Water Program, the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the Ombudsman's Office for Injured Workers in the Department of Consumer and Business Services, as well as the Mattel Corporation.

The responses were developed to the best of our knowledge at the present time. This document may be updated in the future if we receive new information.

Section X. The Health Consultation Report

Q: Was study data taken from death certificates?

The data that we reviewed for the health consultation report was obtained from the National Death Index, a computerized database that receives information from state vital records departments about individual cases of death and those causes of death. The study that was done for the current report involved using these electronic data, rather than actual death certificates.

Q: Are EPA's new toxicity standards used in the health consultation?

EPA has released new guidelines for TCE called "cancer slope factors." Cancer slope factors are theoretical risk parameters that are used for determining site cleanup standards. These factors may also be used in initially determining whether a particular site may pose a threat to public health. EPA's new guidelines call for more stringent goals in site cleanup. Oregon DEQ has incorporated EPA's new guidelines to ensure that site cleanup measures are as protective to human health as possible.

The EPA guidelines do not directly apply to epidemiologic investigations. These types of studies examine actual exposures and health outcomes, as opposed to theoretical risks. EPA uses the results of such epidemiological investigations to develop cancer slope factors. The View-Master health consultation report and the proposed health interview study therefore do not use EPA's new toxicity guidelines. Conversely, they may be able to provide important new information that could shape EPA's future guidelines.

Q: How to send comments?

Official comments about the health consultation report should be sent to ATTN: Chief, Program Evaluation, Records, & Information Services Branch, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, 1600 Clifton Road (E60), Atlanta, GA 30333. Instructions on how to submit comments were provided on the second page of the health consultation report. The comment period was originally scheduled to close on February 28, 2003, but was extended to March 28, 2003. Although the public comment period has now formally ended, DHS would welcome any additional comments on the health consultation report, for consideration in future efforts by DHS to develop the proposed health study.