

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



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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 III. Contaminants Other than TCE

Q: Are there other contaminants (in the water) and health risks? What about the other chemicals, PCE & DCE?

In addition to TCE, PCE was detected in the View-Master supply well at levels above the MCL. There is no known history of PCE use in the View-Master factory's manufacturing processes. Bruce Gilles, project manager at Oregon DEQ, has observed the presence of low levels of PCE at other sites in which TCE is the primary groundwater contaminant, and speculates that small amounts of PCE might have been present in the solvent-grade TCE product that was used in the past.

Both PCE and TCE are reasonably anticipated to be human carcinogens. The average concentration of TCE found in the View-Master supply well was nearly 300 times the federal safety standard for TCE in drinking water. The average concentration of PCE, by contrast, was less than 9 times the federal safety standard for PCE.

Low levels of cis-1,2-DCE were detected in the supply well. The presence of this substance is probably attributable to the decomposition of other chlorinated chemicals in the well.¹ Cis-1,2-DCE is considered a non-carcinogen by EPA and other organizations. The quantity of cis-1,2-DCE observed in the well was within federal safety limits.

Q: You mention data on TCE, but the health consultation also mentions MCL. What effects may those chemicals/elevated levels have?

As stated on page 3 of the Health Consultation report, "MCL" is an abbreviation for the terms "Maximum Contaminant Level". The MCL is set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency for Drinking Water Standards. This is the highest amount of contamination that EPA would allow in drinking water. The MCL is a comparison value and does not represent any chemical or contaminant.

¹ Cis-1,2-dichloroethylene (cis-1,2-DCE) should not be confused with ethylene dichloride. Ethylene dichloride is also known as 1,2-dichloroethane, abbreviated 1,2-DCA. Although ethylene dichloride was used at the View-Master factory for the assembly of projectors and small products (1), ethylene dichloride was not a contaminant found in the supply well.