

Environmental Health Update

Smokey Mountain Smelters (SMS), Knoxville, Knox County



Smokey Mountain Smelters operated in south Knoxville years ago. When the business closed, it left hazardous materials on the property and in the ground. Together, EPA, TDEC, and TDH have worked to clean up the site, making the neighborhood a safer place to live.

- From the 1920s to 1960s, the site was used by fertilizer companies
- From 1979 to 1994, Smokey Mountain Smelters operated at the site
- In 1994, SMS closed, leaving behind many years of wastes on and buried under the site
- Starting in 1997, the state investigated environmental concerns at the SMS Site
- In 2010, the site was proposed to the Federal government for Superfund clean-up funding
- In 2010, Smokey Mountain Smelters was added to the National Priorities List
- By June 2011, EPA finished partial clean-up operation

Former Industrial site Cleaned up by the U.S. EPA

Smokey Mountain Smelters (SMS) was in business from 1979 to 1994. SMS melted down metals to recover aluminum. It was located at 1508 Maryville Pike on 13 acres of land. The operators abandoned the site. They left hazardous materials on the ground, in a building, and buried underground.

The State of Tennessee Departments of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) and Health (TDH) investigated environmental concerns at the site.

In the past, people could have been exposed to hazards by touching, breathing, or accidentally eating the waste materials. The SMS Site had waste piles of aluminum dross and saltcake. When dross or saltcake gets wet, it releases ammonia gas. Ammonia gas is very pungent and can take your breath away. There were many physical hazards at the site, such as old equipment, waste tires, and rusted drums. A lagoon contained waste. A nearby creek was polluted as well. These environmental concerns put the SMS Site on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL) of the most contaminated sites in the nation needing to be cleaned up.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) performed initial clean-up activities at the site in 2010 and 2011 to address hazards and stabilize the site. EPA removed physical and chemical hazards. Buried wastes were either removed from the site or safely landfilled onsite. The land was graded to control rain water run-off. The lagoon was removed. The surface water drainage ditch and the creek were filled with rock to eliminate contact with potentially hazardous water or leachate. Although, the site is safer, people should not trespass on the former industrial property.

By June of 2011, EPA finished their partial clean-up operation. EPA will keep the site stabilized and plant grass. The environmental work is not completely done. EPA's on-site and off-site comprehensive investigation continues. Work to maintain the site will continue for several years.



Physical hazards such as old tires and rusted drums were removed from the site.



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4

Superfund Program

61 Forsyth Street, SW

Atlanta GA 30303

Phone: (404) 562-8819

Toll-free: (800) 241-1754

www.epa.gov

Smokey Mountain Smelters in South Knoxville

This aerial image shows the old industrial building that was demolished. Notice that there are houses, apartments, highway, and railroad tracks nearby. Although, the site has been cleaned up, please do not go on the site. Do not let children play on the former hazardous waste site or in the nearby creek. There are both warning signs and security fences to discourage trespassers. If you have concerns about safety at the site, please contact TDEC or EPA.



Department of Environment and Conservation

Division of Remediation

3711 Middlebrook Pike

Knoxville TN 37921

Phone: (865) 594-6035

Toll-free: (888) 891-8332

www.tdec.net

Responding to Your Environmental Health Concerns

The Tennessee Department of Health's Environmental Epidemiology Program assists TDEC and EPA with environmental investigations that may affect public health. We also work with the Knox County Health Department. The Environmental Epidemiology Program has visited the Smokey Mountain Smelters Site and surrounding area several times. Each time we check to see if people are likely to come into contact with chemical or physical hazards on the site.

We are writing a Public Health Assessment (PHA) through our Cooperative Agreement with the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). This report details our environmental public health investigation. It also provides any needed recommendations for additional cleanup and a commitment to working with other agencies to get it done. The PHA report will be available on our website or can be mailed to you.

If you have concerns that the Smokey Mountain Smelters Site could affect your health, please contact TDH.



Department of Health

Environmental Epidemiology

1st Floor Cordell Hull Bldg

425 5th Avenue North

Nashville TN 37243

Phone: (615) 741-7247

Toll-free: (800) 404-3006

www.tennessee.gov/health