US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 4
SAM NUNN ATLANTA FEDERAL CENTER
61 FORSYTH STREET, S.W.
ATLANTA, GEORGIA 30303

SITE: TVA Kingston Fossil
BREAK: 13.7
OTHER:

December 28, 2008

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), in consultation with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, has reviewed available environmental data. Environmental data of the fly ash release so far indicates that several heavy metals are present in the water slightly above drinking water standards, but below concentrations the Agency knows to be harmful to humans. The one exception may be arsenic. One sample of river water out of many taken indicates concentrations that are very high and further investigations are in progress. Arsenic was not detected in samples taken close to the Kingston Water Intake. Unless people regularly drink untreated river water, the arsenic should not cause any adverse health effects. Other than the arsenic concern in the river water, fly ash can be irritating to the skin and respiratory passages.

All of the contaminants reported to date, including arsenic, would most likely be removed from the water by the normal treatment processes that remove dirt and soil from water. Water from other sources that are not normally treated, such as private drinking water wells or springs, may be contaminated if impacted by the release of the fly ash. These sources of water should not be used for drinking, cooking or bathing until they have been evaluated. EPA and the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation are continuing to sample drinking water wells, municipal water, soils, river water and river sediment.

Anyone coming into contact with the impacted soils, sediments or the water should wash their hands with soap and water, especially before eating or drinking or smoking tobacco products. It is suggested that clothing that comes in contact with the impacted soils, sediments or water should be washed separately from other clothes and washed more than once if heavily soiled.

Fly ash is the ash captured in the stack of the power plant and is a very fine, powdery material. As wet fly ash sediments dry out, dust may become an issue. EPA is not yet sure of the impact of dry fly ash material in the vicinity of the TVA plant, since the particles that could become airborne may have been washed downstream. This matter is currently under investigation. EPA and TVA have begun monitoring for levels of fly ash in the air. In the meantime, it is suggested that people avoid activities that generate dust. The dust may be irritating to the skin and nasal passages, especially to those who have conditions affecting their breathing, such as asthma or other respiratory illnesses. If people feel that they have been affected by the dust, they should leave the area and wash exposed skin with soap and water as soon as possible. If people have a pre-existing condition, they should follow a doctor's advice. If people have to work in an area that is dusty, they should brush off dust at that location before departing. This can be done by wetting the soil and dust before disturbing it; by taking two sets of clothes and leaving one for working in the dusty area; and by washing the hands and face with soap and water often.

10644931