

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Roane County Joint Information Center Kingston Ash Release

Press Release Number 002, Dec 29, 2008

(HARRIMAN, Tenn. - December 29, 2008) Preliminary environmental data of the fly ash release at the TVA Kingston Fossil Plant in Harriman, Tenn. has been reviewed for health effects. Though there is no indication of acute health effects resulting from contact with the coal fly ash material, it is recommended that direct contact with the coal fly ash be avoided, including preventing children's play in affected areas and keeping pets away from the coal fly ash material. Anyone coming into contact with the impacted soils, sediments or the water should wash their hands thoroughly 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. These precautions are in accordance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Centers for Disease Control recommendations for public health protection.

Sampling in the vicinity of the Kingston water plant and of the water being served by Kingston showed no violations of drinking water standards. Samples taken closer to the fly ash release did slightly exceed drinking water standards for several heavy metals. Arsenic was found in one sample close to the spill to be above the maximum contaminant level allowed for drinking water. Continued daily sampling will be conducted to assure that Kingston's water supply is safe. 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.

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 continue to sample drinking water wells, municipal water, soils, river water and river sediment.

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 for area residents. Response officials are currently evaluating the potential for health effects associated with dust, and both 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 believe they have been affected by the dust from the TVA coal fly ash release, they should leave the area and wash exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water. If people have a pre-existing respiratory 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.

Fish consumption advisories in place for the Clinch, Emory and Tennessee Rivers and the Watts Bar Reservoir prior to the TVA coal fly ash spill should continue to be observed. For information on existing fish advisories, go to <http://www.tn.gov/environment/wpc/publications/advisories.pdf>

Flooding information and what to do to cleanup after a flood event is available at www.epa.gov/naturalevents/flooding.html#flooding and <http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/floods/sanitation.asp>.

Unified Command JIC Health Effects 12-29-08, Page 1 of 2 Page(s), 12/29/2008, 10:52 AM

For health concerns related to the coal fly ash release in Harriman, a hotline has been established for the public:
800-404-3006 for the Tennessee Department of Health