

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Our Priorities



"These priorities are built around the challenges and opportunities inherent in our mission to protect human health and the environment. I have confidence in our ability to meet every challenge, and seize every opportunity."

– Lisa P. Jackson, Administrator

- ✓ Taking Action on Climate Change
- ✓ Improving Air Quality
- ✓ Assuring the Safety of Chemicals
- ✓ Cleaning Up our Communities
- ✓ Protecting America's Waters
- ✓ Expanding the Conversation on Environmentalism and Working for Environmental Justice
- ✓ Building Strong State and Tribal Partnerships





EPA'S WORK TO PROTECT THE HEALTH OF WOMEN AND GIRLS

EPA's efforts to keep our air and water clean protect the health of women and girls across the country. Women are frequent sufferers of heart attacks and cardiovascular disease – just two of many deadly medical issues linked to pollution in the environment. Additionally, children are uniquely affected by environmental hazards due to their body size and their developing immune and respiratory systems.

Protecting Children and Families from Mercury and Air Toxics

EPA recently finalized the nation's first-ever Mercury and Air Toxics Standards for power plant emissions. Before these standards, there were no national standards to limit the amounts of mercury, arsenic, chromium, nickel and acid gases power plants across the country could release into the air we breathe. Mercury is a neurotoxin that's particularly harmful to children, and emissions of mercury and other air toxics have been linked to damage to developing nervous systems, respiratory illnesses and other diseases. Once MATS is fully implemented in 2016, it will prevent up to:

- **11,000** premature deaths
- **4,700** heart attacks
- **3,100** emergency room visits among children across the nation
- **540,000** sick days in the workforce
- **30,000** cases of aggravated asthma among kids between six and 18 years old.

Working to Decrease Exposure to Toxic Chemicals

A child born in America today will grow up exposed to more chemicals than a child from any other generation in our history. In 2005 one study found 287 different chemicals in the cord blood of 10 newborn babies – chemicals from pesticides, fast food packaging, coal and gasoline emissions, and trash incineration. With this in mind, EPA has consistently advocated for updating the 1976 Toxic Substances Control Act to address the abundance of chemicals in our environment and in our bodies in 2012.

- As part of EPA's comprehensive efforts to enhance the agency's chemical management program, the agency has issued action plans on a range of chemicals that pose a concern to the public.
- In 2011, EPA announced that it would move forward with the development of a regulation for perchlorate to protect Americans from any potential health impacts, while also continuing to take steps to ensure the quality of the water they drink. Perchlorate is both a naturally occurring and man-made chemical, and scientific research indicates that it may impact the normal function of the thyroid, which produces important developmental hormones. **Thyroid hormones are critical to the normal development and growth of fetuses, infants and children.**

Keeping Children Safe at School

In 2010, EPA completed air quality testing outside 63 schools in 22 states and at two tribal schools as part of an unprecedented school air monitoring initiative to protect children from toxic air pollution around schools. **More than 53 million children and about 6 million adults spend a significant portion of their days in more than 120,000 public and private school buildings.**

In addition to monitoring air quality at our nation's schools, EPA has developed school siting guidelines to help communities consider environmental factors when selecting school locations and supported a Clean School bus program to reduce children's exposure to diesel exhaust and the amount of air pollution created by diesel school buses.