



# Bishop Road Landfill Fire

## Fairburn, Georgia

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) created this fact sheet to answer your questions about the health effects of breathing smoke from the Bishop Road Landfill Fire and steps you can take to help protect your health.

### What is ATSDR doing?

ATSDR is collaborating with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GA EPD) to evaluate the results of air samples collected near the Bishop Road Landfill Fire to see



ATSDR staff checks air-monitoring equipment

if breathing smoke from the fire could affect people's health. The samples were tested for:

- Particulate matter (PM) – very small particles in the air
- Volatile and Semi-Volatile Organic Chemicals (VOCs) – chemicals that evaporate into the air easily
- Hydrogen Sulfide (H<sub>2</sub>S) – gas that smells like rotten eggs
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) – clear, odorless gas
- Metals

### What steps can I take to reduce my exposure to smoke?

- Some people are more sensitive to breathing smoke or smelling odors (children under 18 years of age) and the elderly (over 65 years old). Stay indoors when you see or smell smoke, especially if you have respiratory problems such as asthma, Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), emphysema, or heart disease.
- Talk to your health care provider if you notice your respiratory or heart problems getting worse. ATSDR can provide contacts for your doctor to consult with specialists familiar with health effects caused by exposure to chemicals and smoke. Reduce and avoid outdoor activities, when possible, if you see or smell smoke.
- Close the doors and windows of your house to keep smoke from getting inside.
- Follow the recommendations of your local or state health department.

### What are some potential health effects from breathing smoke?

- Some people are more sensitive to breathing smoke or smelling odors. They may have the following symptoms:
  - » Coughing
  - » Nausea
  - » Trouble breathing normally
  - » Stinging eyes
  - » Scratchy throat
  - » Runny nose
  - » Irritated sinuses
  - » Wheezing and shortness of breath
  - » Chest pain
  - » Headaches
  - » An asthma attack
  - » Tiredness
  - » Fast heartbeat
- Most symptoms will improve rapidly after you quit breathing the smoke.

### The Bottom Line

- Symptoms may worsen in people who have existing breathing problems or heart conditions after breathing smoke from the fire.
- Smelling the odors from the smoke may cause nausea and headaches, or irritate your throat and eyes. These symptoms should improve after leaving the fire area.



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

## Next Steps

### ATSDR will:

- evaluate air test results.
- share the results of the landfill fire air samples and our recommendations with EPA, GA EPD, and the community.
- answer health questions for community members and health care providers.
- continue to work with EPA and GA EPD to address public health issues.



Smoke from landfill fire

## How can I find out more?

For health questions, contact ATSDR

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For general questions, contact GA EPD

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The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) is a federal public health agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in Atlanta, Georgia. Our mission is to protect communities from harmful health effects related to exposure to natural and man-made hazardous substances in the environment.