



# Benton Creosote Works Site Activities Update Fact Sheet

6695 Louisiana Highway 3, Benton, Louisiana

January 2024

This Fact Sheet will tell you about...

- Current Site Activities
- Site Information
- Potential Contaminants of Concern
- Where to Find More Information

## Site Background

The Benton Creosoting facility in Benton, Louisiana, started wood preserving operations in 1948 and in 1962 began operating under the business name Kennedy Saw Mill, Inc., making products such as pilings, telephone poles and railroad ties. The primary wood treating chemical was creosote, but pentachlorophenol (PCP) may have also been used. Operations temporarily ceased in November 1985 and resumed in 1987, continuing at a lower production rate until 2008 when the facility closed. The site is located at 6695 Highway 3 in Benton, Bossier Parish, LA within a rural / residential area.

## Current Site Activities

The EPA is stepping in to safeguard Palmetto Place Apartment residents in Benton, Louisiana, from potential dioxin-contaminated soil exposure. On January 18, 2024, the EPA authorized emergency response contractors to install fencing in the northern section of the complex, limiting access and preventing potential exposure to contaminated soil. Additional sampling is authorized to precisely determine the extent of the contamination and the best method for soil removal. Previous samples indicated the presence of dioxins and other chemicals at levels that could pose health and environmental risks.

## EPA Involvement:

In 2023, the EPA got involved with the Benton site due to the unknown concentration of wood treating chemicals, potentially spreading beyond the facility. Because these chemicals pose health and environmental risks, the EPA conducted a two-phase site assessment at the Benton Creosoting facility in Benton, Louisiana.

Phase 1, starting in June 2023, focused on the sawmill area and drainage pathways. Results revealed contamination in some off-site paths, including a ditch flowing through Palmetto Place Apartments. Phase 2, beginning in October 2023, collected samples from the Palmetto Place drainage ditch area to further understand contamination. Using a grid system, the EPA collected samples at various depths, refining assessments for containment within the ditch walls. Results showed dioxin and furan levels above EPA's risk-based levels that are protective for long term exposure. The EPA, with assistance from the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ), is further evaluating these results.

## Potential Contaminants of Concern (COCs):

Creosote compounds, PCP, and dioxins are commonly found in historical wood treating chemicals, as well as in soils and water where wood treating operations occurred.

Both PCP and dioxins are categorized as likely carcinogens by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the EPA, and the International Agency for Research on Cancer. Elevated levels of PCP have been linked to liver effects. Elevated exposure to dioxins is linked to changes in human and animal hormone levels, reduced reproductive ability, and a suppressed immune system in animals. Exposure to creosote compounds has been

linked to causing skin cancer in both humans and animals at specific levels.

**For More Information on the Site**

See attached EPA website:



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