



Comment Period Now Open for Proposed Ethylene Oxide Rules

May 2023 Fact Sheet

Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is reaching out to residents surrounding commercial sterilizers that release high levels of the chemical - ethylene oxide (EtO) into the air, including International Sterilization Laboratory (ISL) located at 217 Sampey Road in Groveland.

EtO is a colorless, odorless gas that is primarily used for sterilization purposes. Inhalation of EtO at elevated levels *over a lifetime* can increase a person's risk of getting cancer. However, single-day exposures to the concentrations found in residential communities are not an immediate threat to an individual's health.

The EPA is sharing this information because communities have a right to know about emissions that could affect their health and well-being. The EPA will host a virtual community meeting on **Thursday, June 15th** to provide residents an opportunity to learn more about EtO and how to submit comments to the proposed rule and decision. Please follow the instructions in the blue box above to register for the meeting.

Virtual Public Meeting

Thursday, June 15, 2023

Community Meeting: 7:00 - 9:00 p.m.

Call-in No: (646) 828-7666

Webinar ID: 160 386 6856

Register for the virtual meeting here:

<https://bit.ly/432QTCu>

The EPA proposed new rules to limit EtO emissions from commercial sterilizers and is seeking input from the public on the rules. In the interim, the Agency is working with ISL and other commercial sterilizers across the country to find ways they can voluntarily implement early emission controls to reduce risk. The comment period for the proposed rule closes on **June 27, 2023**. During that time, any person can provide comments to the Agency about any aspect of the proposed rules. To learn more about the proposed rules and how to comment, please visit www.epa.gov/eto.

The EPA's Proposed Rules

In April 2023, EPA issued proposals that are expected to reduce risks in communities and for workers. The EPA has proposed new set of rules and decision to limit EtO emissions from commercial sterilizers and is seeking input from the public:

1. **Reducing EtO Emissions from Commercial Sterilizers:** The EPA proposed to strengthen emission standards for the 86 commercial sterilizers that are currently operating across the country as well as for new sterilizers. These requirements, if finalized, will reduce the amount of EtO emitted from commercial sterilizers by 80 percent and will reduce risk in nearby communities to levels below the CAA benchmark for elevated risk. The comment period for the commercial sterilizer proposed rule

closes on **June 27, 2023**. During that time, you can provide comments to the Agency about any aspect of the proposed rule. To learn more about the proposed rule and how to comment, please visit www.epa.gov/eto.

2. **Reducing Risk to Workers in the Sterilization Industry:** The EPA proposed a broad set of new protections under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) that will reduce risk for all workers who use EtO to sterilize things and for others who work, live, or go to school near sterilization facilities. The comment period for the FIFRA proposed decision closes on **June 27, 2023**. During that time, you can provide comments to the Agency about any aspect of the proposed protections under FIFRA. To learn more about the proposed decision and how to comment, please visit www.epa.gov/eto.

Please visit www.epa.gov/eto for additional information, including a link to view EPA's August 10th National Public Webinar, location-specific maps, information about individual commercial sterilizers, and health risks for residents and workers.

Background

The EPA has regulated EtO emissions for 30 years, however in 2016, new scientific information revealed that EtO is more toxic than previously understood. This prompted the EPA to conduct nationwide analyses and intensive data collection, which has revealed that certain communities near commercial sterilizers could have elevated cancer risks due to lifetime exposures to EtO.

The EPA has determined that portions of Groveland neighborhoods in the vicinity of ISL may have an estimated lifetime cancer risk at or above 100 in a million. A lifetime cancer risk of 100 in a million means that, if 1 million people were exposed to this level of EtO in the air 24 hours a day for 70 years, 100 people would be expected to develop cancer from that exposure. The risk gradually increases as you get closer to the facility, reaching an estimated maximum of 200 in a million in areas closest to ISL.

Contact Information:

If you or someone you know would like to be added to EPA's distribution list to receive future updates, please contact Region4EtO@epa.gov or 1-800-241-1754.