

February 2009



About the Site

The former American Beryllium Company (ABC) site is on 5 acres at 1600 Tallevast Road, southern Manatee County. In 1962, the plant began making machine parts from metals containing beryllium. Disposal of solvents, including trichloroethylene (TCE), contaminated the ground water. Lockheed Martin bought the facility and stopped using it in 1996.

In 2004, the Manatee County Health Department (CHD) and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) found TCE and other solvents in 13 nearby private drinking water wells. Tallevast residents came into

contact with these solvents through drinking, showering, and other household uses of the water. Since 2004, all nearby residents have been using municipal water.

The Tallevast community had dozens of health concerns about having come into contact with the contamination from the site. The Florida DOH gathered these health concerns and assessed how likely each chemical found there is to cause a certain health problem. The Florida DOH has written several reports on related topics since 2004.

Recent Health Reports Now Available

Tallevast residents can now obtain three recent Florida DOH reports about Tallevast and the site, including one reviewing cancer rates, another assessing ambient (outdoor) air and one about contaminated soil and ground water. Find out elsewhere in this fact sheet how to get copies of each report.

Cancer Study Findings

In response to community concerns about cancer, Florida DOH reviewed existing data. They used the statewide cancer data base and the statewide death data to investigate cancer in Tallevast. The review noted only a few cancer cases among black Tallevast residents that could be considered related to the solvents found in the community: 1 case of leukemia, 1 of non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, 1 kidney cancer and 1 bladder cancer in the period 1970 through 2006. The cancer type most highly linked to TCE is liver cancer and no cases were found in Tallevast residents during this period of review. Cancers found among whites within the Tallevast zip codes included 4 kidney cancers, 2 non-Hodgkin's lymphomas, and 2 bladder cases. It could not be determined from the records if these individuals lived near Tallevast or were former American Beryllium workers. The review shows that the three most common types of cancer found among Tallevast residents (predominantly African-Americans) are the three most common cancer types seen for all Floridians: prostate, lung/bronchus and breast cancer.

A community-specific study would be needed to determine cancer rates over time among all Tallevast residents as this is the method which could best gather and include information from past residents. The review that DOH has done did not include interviews or information on former residents. DOH did discuss a number of limitations using statewide data bases for areas that are small like Tallevast.

Florida DOH is now working with FOCUS leaders on ideas for a health survey

Ambient Air and Soil Gas Report Findings

Residents were concerned about possible harm from breathing volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) when the county dug shallow trenches to bury permanent water lines.

- Based on soil gas and ambient (outdoor) air testing, inhaling VOCs during the 2 month installation of Tallevast water lines is no apparent public health hazard.

Public Health Assessment Report Findings

The public health assessment overall report gauges the risk to human health from coming into contact with contamination on and offsite in Tallevast.

- Past long-term use of ground water with the highest measured tri-

chloroethylene (TCE) levels could have resulted in a moderate to high increased theoretical risk of cancer. TCE is linked with leukemia, lymphoma, kidney and liver cancer.

- Soil on and offsite poses

no apparent public health hazard.

- Surface water on and offsite also poses no apparent public health hazard.

Past Health Activities

- Florida DOH and DEP tested Tallevast private drinking water wells.
- Florida DOH tested indoor air in four Tallevast buildings and reported the results.
- Florida DOH tested Tallevast fruits and vegetables and reported the results.
- Manatee and Sarasota CHDs tested 359 former ABC workers, family members, and Tallevast residents for beryllium sensitivity. Manatee CHD and Florida DOH held a public meeting to discuss the testing. Florida DOH and ATSDR analyzed the test data and reported the results.
- Florida DOH and Manatee CHD have participated in numerous meetings and conference calls with Tallevast residents and other agencies.
- In July 2004, the Florida DOH informed nearby residents that except for lead in one surface soil sample, the levels of chemicals found in Tallevast surface soil samples are not likely to cause illness.
- In November 2004 and June 2005, Florida DOH mailed newsletters to residents to provide updates.
- In April 2006, Florida DOH mailed a newsletter about two beryllium sensitivity health consultation reports.

Recommendations from Recent Reports

- Sampling and review of air, soil and ground water should continue while Lockheed Martin cleans up the site to ensure residents do not come into contact with TCE or other chemicals.
- Residents should only use municipal water and not use well water.
- Tallevast children who have pica behavior (or eat dirt) should have their blood lead levels tested.
- Residents should keep working with the Florida DOH on getting a health study done. The study should try to capture cases of cancer in former as well as current residents. The survey should also help locate health data not already found in state records and check residents' medical records.
- A health study should offer ways for residents to reduce the risk of disease.
- Residents should get screenings for cancer and other diseases proper for their age to help find existing disease and reduce cancer-related deaths.
- Residents should speak to their doctor about any health concerns.

How to Get Copies of These Reports

Pick up a copy of these reports at the Manatee County Health Department at 410 6th Ave East Bradenton, FL 34208

Or have them mailed by calling toll-free (877) 798-2772

Or see them online at: www.myfloridach.com/community/SUPERFUND/pha.htm and scroll down to American Beryllium PHA.

Please share this update with family, friends, and neighbors!

Future Health Activities

- Florida DOH will review a report on new indoor air sampling now underway and make any suggestions needed to protect public health.