



## COMMUNITY INFORMATION

# INDWE STREET, WEST FOOTSCRAY, INDUSTRIAL FIRE - SATURDAY 22 DECEMBER

December 2007

Clean up of the chemical warehouse on Indwe Street, West Footscray involved in a fire on December 22, is underway.

During the fire, chlorine gas was released to the atmosphere and impacted on surrounding areas.

There was a strong chlorine odour detected to the east of the site earlier in the day and low levels of chlorine were detected throughout the day, however, advice provided from Department of Human Services (DHS) and EPA Victoria is that levels detected were **not considered dangerous**, or a threat to health.

Metropolitan Fire Brigade, Worksafe and EPA are working with the owners of the warehouse to have the premises cleaned up and to reduce any residual risk.

A management plan has been prepared that is resulting in the safe storage and removal of wet chemicals. A risk of further spontaneous combustion of wet chemical remains and the management plan has actions to reduce the risk. The premises will be guarded by 24 hour security.

DHS have advised that any people with health concerns as a result of the fire should seek medical advice.

There is a possibility than the chlorine gas may have caused damage to the foliage of some plants. DHS have advised that vegetables and fruit from the home garden should be fine to eat if the fruit and vegetables are washed prior to consumption. If in doubt, do not eat the fruit and vegetables.

The chlorine gas is unlikely to have impacted on rainwater tanks. As is normally recommended, it is not advisable to drink from rainwater tanks.

If you have any health concerns please read the following DHS advice.

## GENERAL ADVICE

Chlorine levels measured at the houses closest to the fire were low.

Soap and water can be used to wash down outdoor surfaces.

Clothes can be washed normally with soap and water.

## WATER

Chlorine gas combined with rain water (cl<sup>-</sup> ion or HCl) will have no impact on water quality (and may even improve quality). Drinking water from the mains supply is safe.

## WASHING ON THE CLOTHES LINE

Chlorine is a bleach, so if clothes are left on the washing line re-washing is recommended because of bleaching issue and to protect sensitive skin (babies) from possible irritant effects.

## FRUIT AND VEGETABLES

Chlorine is unlikely to accumulate in garden fruit and vegetables. These can just be washed and eaten as normal.

For more health information contact:

**Department of Human Services  
Environmental Health Enquiry Line  
1300 761 874 (business hours only)**

For information about site clean up contact:

**EPA Victoria  
West Metropolitan Region  
Ph 9695 2515**