



REPORT FOR ACTION

ChemTRAC 2018 Reporting

Date: November 19, 2019

To: Board of Health

From: Medical Officer of Health

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The ChemTRAC program aims to increase public awareness of chemicals in the environment and reduce pollution from industrial and commercial sources by annually reporting to the public on the manufacture, use or release of chemicals by local industries. It is administered by Toronto Public Health (TPH) and is guided by the Environmental Reporting and Disclosure By-law, which requires certain facilities to report each year if they use or release any of 25 priority substances above identified thresholds. The information reported to ChemTRAC is then publically released. The information for 2018 is currently available online through the program's interactive map and in the 2019 annual report. ChemTRAC, with its lower reporting thresholds and focus on local industries, complements the National Pollutant Release Inventory which captures information from facilities with large emissions. Regulating local industrial and commercial releases of contaminants that can affect human health and the environment is the responsibility of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and falls outside the scope of the ChemTRAC program.

This report provides an update on the ChemTRAC program and responds to City Council's June 2019 request for a review of industrial operations in Ward 5 (York South-Weston) to determine compliance with the reporting requirements of the ChemTRAC program.

For 2018, 26 facilities in Ward 5 reported amounts above the thresholds. As part of annual data quality control procedures, staff initiated audits of randomly selected facilities from the ward, including facilities that reported to ChemTRAC and facilities that did not report to ChemTRAC. Of 16 completed audits, a majority (88%) of audited facilities were in compliance with the By-law. Those who require assistance to be in compliance, including one identified in the audit this year, receive support from ChemTRAC to submit an accurate report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health receive this report for information.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact resulting from the adoption of the recommendation in this report.

DECISION HISTORY

At its June 18, 2019 meeting, City Council requested the Medical Officer of Health to undertake a review of industrial operations in Ward 5, York South-Weston to determine compliance with the reporting requirements of the City's ChemTRAC program and report the findings to the Board of Health.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM8.30>

COMMENTS

Background

Through public reporting, the ChemTRAC program increases public awareness of chemicals in the environment and encourages facilities to reduce pollution from industrial and commercial sources. It is administered by TPH and is guided by the Environmental Reporting and Disclosure By-law (Municipal Code Chapter 423), which requires certain facilities to report each year if they use or release any of 25 priority substances above identified thresholds. The By-law requires that TPH staff provide public disclosure of the manufacture, use or release of chemicals after they are reported to TPH. Facilities are expected to voluntarily comply or come into compliance once an issue has been identified through the ChemTRAC program.

As a release inventory, ChemTRAC is a database that collects information on air pollution sources and their release within the local airshed. The By-law under which ChemTRAC functions does not address what air pollutants can be released. Regulating local industrial and commercial releases of contaminants that can affect human health and the environment is the responsibility of The Ontario Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks and falls outside the scope of the ChemTRAC program.

This report provides an update on the ChemTRAC program and responds to City Council's June 2019 request for the Medical Officer of Health to undertake a review of industrial operations in Ward 5, York South-Weston to determine compliance with the

reporting requirements of the ChemTRAC program and report the findings to the Board of Health.

The ChemTRAC Program

Reports from facilities representing more than 30 business sectors across the city are submitted annually through the ChemTRAC program. Businesses that report include autobody shops, dry cleaners, printers, wood product manufacturers, food product manufacturers, and others. ChemTRAC complements the federal National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI) which captures information from facilities with large emissions. ChemTRAC has lower reporting thresholds than NPRI and, as a result, captures information from smaller facilities. The data collected through the ChemTRAC program is reviewed for accuracy and facility compliance, and is released to the public through an online, [interactive map](#) as well as in an annual report. In addition, ChemTRAC provides guidance to businesses so they can voluntarily identify and implement measures to reduce the use of toxic substances or to substitute safer alternatives.

Assessing Compliance

To comply with the By-law, facilities make an assessment to determine if the Environmental Reporting and Disclosure By-law is applicable to their operation. Then, they identify if they use, manufacture, process or release any of the priority substances listed in the By-law at levels that exceed established thresholds. Suitable thresholds for the facilities that are subject to ChemTRAC were identified based on a combination of factors including review of NPRI thresholds for larger facilities, toxicity of the substances, and profiles of industries located in Toronto. Facilities that exceed these thresholds are required to prepare accurate data regarding how much they have used, manufactured, or released, and submit it to the ChemTRAC program by the annual reporting deadline of June 30.

Once the data is submitted, TPH carries out review processes to determine the accuracy of the data reported and to assess compliance with the reporting requirements. This is done using established criteria to identify reports that are missing or incorrect (for example, they are inconsistent with previous years, or report unusually high or low amounts). As well, each year a subset of facilities is selected for audit, which includes a more detailed review of the information submitted, to ensure compliance with the By-law. ChemTRAC staff work with facilities to correct any inaccurate reporting and ensure submission of an accurate report.

2018 ChemTRAC Data

The most recent ChemTRAC data show that 668 facilities across Toronto reported on substances used, manufactured, or released in 2018, which is consistent with previous years. Details and maps providing information such as the amounts of substances reported, facility locations, and breakdowns by sector are available online in the annual report at www.toronto.ca/health/chemtrac.

Facilities in Ward 5 and Compliance Review

In 2018, 26 facilities in Ward 5 reported above threshold amounts to the ChemTRAC program. Of these, most reports came from the automotive sector (six facilities), followed by food and beverage (four), dry cleaning (three), and fabricated metal product

manufacturing (three). The remaining ten reporting facilities represent a mix of sectors. An additional 18 facilities in Ward 5 voluntarily reported below threshold amounts.

Compliance in Ward 5

As part of regular review processes within the ChemTRAC program, a subset of facilities in the Ward was selected for a more detailed review through the audit process. As of October 29, 2019, 16 audits were complete and facilities made an accurate determination of the need to report and amounts to report 88% of the time. For any errors identified during audits, the reports are revised by the facility with input through the ChemTRAC program. One audit identified an error that is currently being revised with support from ChemTRAC staff.

Supporting accurate reporting and By-law compliance

ChemTRAC works directly with facilities to support on-time, accurate reporting, and correct any reporting errors. Facilities in Toronto are notified every year of the By-law requirements, and TPH provides technical support to them by email and phone. Reporting tools are also available on the ChemTRAC website, and facilities can attend ChemTRAC reporting workshops offered every year by TPH.

The reporting that takes place through the ChemTRAC program provides public information on the sources of 25 priority chemicals in Toronto, and is intended to encourage pollution prevention initiatives that are beneficial for health. Ensuring that facilities report accurate data is an important part of ensuring the utility of the information that is collected each year.

More information about the ChemTRAC program, including recently released 2018 data can be found at <https://www.toronto.ca/health/chemtrac>.

CONTACT

Gayle Bursey, Director, Strategy and Preventive Health, Toronto Public Health,
Tel: 416-338-0661, Email: Gayle.Bursey@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Dr. Eileen de Villa
Medical Officer of Health