FACT SHEET

TOLUENE

CAS #: 108-88-3

This fact sheet provides a summary of the Development Support Document (DSD) created by the Toxicology Section (TS) of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) for the development of Regulatory Guidelines (ESL and ReVs) for ambient exposure to this chemical. For more detailed information, please see the DSD or contact the TS by phone (1-877-992-8370) or e-mail (tox@tceq.texas.gov).

What is toluene?

Toluene is a colorless liquid with a sweet, pungent, benzene-like odor. Toluene is used as a raw material to produce benzene, and also as a solvent in the chemical manufacturing industry. Toluene is found in many common household products (aerosols, nail polish, paints and thinners, lacquers, adhesives) and in gasoline. It is also called methylbenzene, methylbenzol, phenyl methane, and toluol.

How is toluene released into ambient air?

Toluene is released into the air through manufacturing processes, and by using household products.

How can toluene affect my health?

Permitted levels of toluene should not cause adverse health and welfare effects. Well conducted human studies indicate that the central nervous system is the primary target. Short-term inhalation exposure to high concentrations of toluene can result in fatigue, sleepiness, headache, and nausea. On a long-term basis, inhalation exposure to high concentrations of toluene can result in irritation of the eyes and respiratory system, sore throat, dizziness, and headache. Toluene is regarded as not classifiable as to its carcinogenicity to humans by the United States Environmental Protection Agency and the International Agency for Research on Cancer and the TCEQ. Toluene has not been classified as a human carcinogen by the TCEQ and the National Toxicology Program.

Is toluene odorous or harmful to plants?

Toluene has a sweet, pungent, benzene-like odor at moderate concentrations. Toluene exposure has not been shown to be harmful to plants.

Why does the TCEQ set Regulatory Guidelines for toluene?

The TCEQ has set various air quality guideline concentrations (ESLs and ReVs) to protect human health and welfare. Please see Definitions of ESLs, ReVs, and AMCVs located on the

TCEQ DSD webpage for more information. The ESLs and ReVs for toluene have been designed to protect the general public from short-term and long-term adverse health and welfare effects. The general public includes children, the elderly, pregnant women and people with preexisting health conditions. If you would like to know more about the specific ESLs and ReVs developed, what the values are and what they are used for, please see the DSD.