

Latest Epidemiological Study of Chloroprene Monomer Workers in the US

Multiple lawsuits have been brought against Denka Performance Elastomer LLC (hereinafter "DPE"), a US subsidiary of Denka Company Limited, in the State of Louisiana in the United States, as announced on February 14, 2020. Multiple residents living near the DPE Pontchartrain Works have pleaded that they have incurred physical, financial, and mental damage due to chloroprene monomers emitted from DPE's chloroprene rubber manufacturing plant, and have claimed damages. DPE is scrutinizing the details of the proceedings and responding properly.

The latest epidemiological study¹ published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine, a magazine for occupational medicine specialists in the US followed nearly 7,000 workers at chloroprene-handling facilities across United States for approximately 70 years and concluded "the risk of death from lung or liver cancer is unrelated" to exposure to the chemical. The study reviewed data over the lifetimes of more than 1,300 employees of the DPE Pontchartrain Works (Louisiana, US) along with approximately 5,500 employees of another company's plant (Kentucky, US) and found the nearly 7,000 reviewed workers experienced below-average rates for all deaths and cancer deaths compared with the U.S. and parish/county averages.

The study, authored by researchers from the University of Pittsburgh and funded by the International Institute of Synthetic Rubber Producers, followed up on a previous study published in 2007 with similar results, based on data up to the end of 2000. Authors of the study say the additional 17 years of data on workers' health outcomes up to 2017 included in the update make it a "more reliable and informative evaluation" of mortality patterns.

Other research² completed by the Louisiana Tumor Registry shows residents in the area where the DPE Pontchartrain Works locates do not experience elevated rates of those cancers compared to state averages.

DPE will continue cooperating with state and federal regulatory agencies, to pursue the best science regarding chemical substances, and work to further reduce environmental load.

(*1)<https://journals.lww.com/joem/pages/results.aspx?txtKeywords=chloroprene>

(*2)<https://sph.lsuhs.edu/louisiana-tumor-registry/data-usestatistics/monographs-publications/current-monograph/>

Reference:

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- "LDEQ confirms 85% emissions reduction achieved, DPE's completion of voluntary program" June 8, 2020
https://www.denka.co.jp/eng/storage/news/pdf/314/20200608_denka_dpe_en.pdf
- "Review of Chloroprene Monomer Toxicity Assessment Performed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency" February 14, 2020
https://www.denka.co.jp/eng/storage/news/pdf/266/20200214_denka_statement_en.pdf
- "Notice Regarding Litigation Against US Subsidiary" February 14, 2020
https://www.denka.co.jp/eng/storage/news/pdf/265/20200214_denka_dpe_litigation_en.pdf
- "Statement regarding NATA's Toxicity Assessments on the Areas Surrounding Denka's U.S. Subsidiary and Initiatives Being Undertaken to Reduce Environmental Burden" June 19, 2019
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About Denka

Denka is a chemical manufacturer headquartered in Chuo-ku, Tokyo. The company specializes in developing business activities on a global scale across a wide range of fields, from inorganic and organic chemicals, to electronic materials and pharmaceuticals. Founded in 1915, Denka has steadily continued to develop and manufacture products that contribute to the development of society by fully utilizing its unique concepts and technological capabilities. Upholding its corporate slogan, "Possibility of chemistry," the company and its president, Manabu Yamamoto, are committed to contributing to the sound development of the society while sincerely tackling the challenges that the society is now confronting.

About Denka Performance Elastomer

Denka Performance Elastomer LLC acquired DuPont's Neoprene manufacturing operations at the Pontchartrain Works site in LaPlace in November 2015. DPE employs around 240 manufacturing jobs associated with the Pontchartrain Works production site. DPE intends to make strategic investments in the Pontchartrain Works facility while adhering to a key DPE guideline to develop and supply products that are safe and environmentally friendly. DPE considers the safe production and handling of materials and products and the prevention of their unauthorized release into the environment as its most important mission as a chemical manufacturer.

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