



**Governor's Office of
Homeland Security &
Emergency Preparedness**

JOINT INFORMATION CENTER

State of Louisiana News Desk #: 225.358.5361

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 8, 2010

**Louisiana DHH Releases Oil Spill-Related Exposure
Information**

71 Exposure-Related Illnesses; Officials Continue to Monitor Health Impacts

BATON ROUGE - Seventy-one cases of oil spill-related illnesses have been reported to the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH) to date, according to a report released today. Fifty of those involved workers on oil rigs or those involved in the oil spill clean-up efforts, while 21 illnesses were reported by the general public.

Epidemiologists and scientists with DHH continue to work closely with other state, regional and local officials, as well as hospitals, clinics and mobile health units to monitor in the impacts of oil and dispersants on Louisiana residents, workers and volunteers along the coast.

The Department has put out calls for doctors and medical facilities to report all illnesses and injuries related to the oil spill for an ongoing database. Each exposure-related complaint is followed up on by Office of Public Health staff.

Worker Illnesses

Most workers who reported exposure-related illnesses experienced symptoms such as throat irritation, cough, shortness of breath, eye irritation, nausea, chest pain and headaches. Eight workers were hospitalized. These hospitalizations averaged one day.

Illness Reported by General Public

Most of the illnesses reported by the general public have been related to odors from the oil spill. Officials have urged those who may be sensitive to the odors to stay indoors with doors and windows closed, and to run their air conditioning. Residents with pre-existing medical conditions, such as asthma or other respiratory illness, should consider contacting their physician if they feel symptomatic.

Breakdown of Illness by Category

- ? Of the workers who reported illnesses, 48 were male, two were female. Of the general public, six were male, while 15 were female. Most of those individuals who reported illnesses were between the ages of 18 and 64.
- ? Most workers either utilized an emergency room or urgent care center, or a clinic or physician's office (18 and 28, respectively). For those members of the general public who reported illnesses, 13 called the Louisiana Poison center, four utilized an emergency room or urgent care center, three went to a clinic or physician's office and one called a DHH hotline.

Questions about exposure-related illnesses can be directed to the Louisiana Poison Center: 1-800-222-1222. The Poison Center is staffed 24-hours a day and can provide medical management advice. To report an exposure-related illness, call 1-888-293-7020.

The full Oil Spill Surveillance Report is available [here](#). The report will be generated by DHH weekly and posted on www.dhhemergencynews.com.

DHH's Office of Public Health, Section of Environmental Epidemiology & Toxicology gathers and analyzes information provided by surveillance sites, including hospital emergency departments, outpatient clinics, physician's offices and the Louisiana Poison Center.

For more information related to the oil spill, visit www.emergency.louisiana.gov. Connect with us on www.facebook.com/GOHSEP and on Twitter as @GOHSEP. View photos from the state's response efforts at www.flickr.com/photos/lagohsep.