



Comment Period Now Open for Proposed Ethylene Oxide Protection Measures

June 2023 Fact Sheet

Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is reaching out to residents surrounding commercial sterilizers that release high levels of the chemical - ethylene oxide (EtO) into the air, including the American Contract Systems (Fort Myers facility) located at 11600 Adelmo Ln, Fort Myers, FL 33966.

EtO is a colorless, odorless gas that is primarily used for sterilization purposes. The EPA has regulated EtO emissions for 30 years, however in 2016, new scientific information revealed that EtO is more toxic than previously understood. This prompted the EPA to conduct nationwide analyses and intensive data collection, which have revealed that certain communities near commercial sterilizers could have elevated cancer risks due to lifetime exposures to EtO.

Inhalation of EtO at elevated levels *over a lifetime* can increase a person's risk of getting cancer. However, single-day exposures to the concentrations found in residential communities normally do not pose an immediate threat to an individual's health. If you have health-related concerns, please contact your personal physician or local health department.

The EPA has determined that Fort Myers neighborhoods in the vicinity of American Contract Systems may have an elevated lifetime cancer risk. The risk gradually increases as you get closer to the American Contract Systems facility (see Figure 1 on page 2).

The EPA is sharing this information because communities have a right to know about emissions that could affect their health and well-being. The EPA will host virtual community meetings on **June 22, 2023**, to provide residents and workers an opportunity to learn more about EtO and how to submit comments on the recently proposed rule and decision. The community can participate via Zoom. Please follow the instructions in the blue box above to register for the meeting. A recording of the meeting will be available at www.epa.gov/fl/fort-myers-fl-american-contract-systems-fort-myers-facility.

Virtual Public Meetings

Thursday, June 22, 2023

10:00 a.m. – noon

Call-in No: (646) 828-7666

Webinar ID: 160 568 2894

Register for the virtual meeting here:

<https://bit.ly/3IXOPo1>

7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Call-in No: (646) 828-7666

Webinar ID: 161 042 4760

Register for the virtual meeting here:

<https://bit.ly/3IXe35S>

The EPA's Proposed Ethylene Oxide Protection Measures

In April 2023, EPA issued proposals that are expected to reduce risks in communities and for workers. The EPA has proposed new set of protection measures to limit EtO emissions from commercial sterilizers and is seeking input from the public. In the interim, the Agency is working with American Contract Systems and other commercial sterilizers across the country to find ways they can voluntarily implement early emission controls to reduce risk:

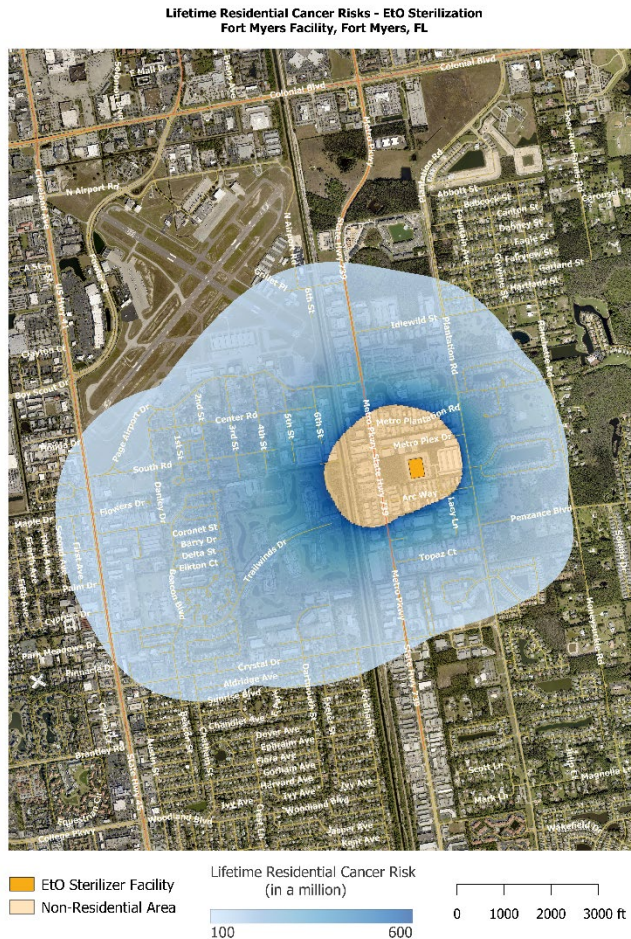


Figure 1 - EtO Gradient Map in Fort Myers, FL

Please visit www.epa.gov/eto for additional information, including a link to view EPA's May 1, 2023, National Public Webinar, information about individual commercial sterilizers, and health risks for residents and workers.

Esta información se puede encontrar en español en www.epa.gov/fl/fort-myers-fl-american-contract-systems-fort-myers-facility. If you need interpretation services, please request them when you register for the meeting.

Contact Information:

If you or someone you know would like to be added to EPA's distribution list to receive future updates, please contact Region4EtO@epa.gov or 1-800-241-1754.

1. Reducing EtO Emissions from Commercial Sterilizers:

The EPA proposed to strengthen emission standards for the 86 commercial sterilizers that are currently operating across the country as well as for new sterilizers. These requirements, if finalized, will reduce the amount of EtO emitted from commercial sterilizers by 80 percent and will reduce risk in nearby communities to levels below the CAA benchmark for elevated risk. The comment period for the commercial sterilizer proposed rule closes on **June 27, 2023**. During that time, you can provide comments to the Agency about any aspect of the proposed regulations. To learn more about the proposed rules and how to comment, please visit www.epa.gov/eto.

2. Reducing Risk to Workers in the Sterilization Industry:

The EPA proposed a broad set of new protections under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) that will reduce risk for all workers who use EtO to sterilize things and for others who work, live, or go to school near sterilization facilities. The comment period for the FIFRA proposed protections closes on **June 27, 2023**. During that time, you can provide comments to the Agency about any aspect of the proposed protections. To learn more about the proposed decision and how to comment, please visit www.epa.gov/eto.