

Ammonia Spill in Fort Erie Health Frequently Asked Questions

As of 5 p.m. on Monday, July, 6, 2015, the Fort Erie Fire Department reports that the spill has been contained and residents may return to their homes.

This information is intended to provide general information about ammonia and its potential impact to your health. This should not replace guidance and advice provided by onsite emergency personnel (such as Fire or Police).

Are there any precautions I should take to prevent any health issues following the spill?

- Precautions to be taken are based on the conditions in your specific area. Please follow the advice of the Fort Erie Fire Department.
- The need for precautions lessens over time as the concentration in the air decreases
- Food products should not be affected by ammonia in the air and are safe to eat

What is ammonia?

- It is a colorless gas with a very distinct odor
- This odor is familiar to many people because ammonia is used in smelling salts, many household and industrial cleaners, and window-cleaning products

Does ammonia pose a health risk?

- The health effects of ammonia are immediate, not long term
- Exposure to high levels of ammonia in air may be irritating to your skin, eyes, throat, and lungs and cause coughing and burns
- Lung damage and death may occur after exposure to very high concentrations of ammonia
- Some people with asthma or respiratory illnesses may be more sensitive to breathing ammonia than others
- If you were in the area affected by the ammonia spill and are experiencing any of the above symptoms, please see a health care provider

What happens to ammonia when it enters the environment?

- Ammonia does not last very long in the environment. It spreads out in the air which results in low concentrations of ammonia. As this occurs, the health risk steadily decreases until it is gone.