



Secrecy is Toxic

You have the right to know

CRTK Fact Sheet

Accessing Pollution Release Reports through the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI)

What information does the NPRI provide?

Legislated by the Canada Environmental Protection Act (CEPA, 1999), the NPRI requires facilities to report releases and transfers of approximately 350 chemicals to Environment Canada. Annual reports contain detailed information about onsite emissions to air, water and land, as well as transfers of hazardous waste off-site for disposal, treatment or recycling. The reports are publicly accessible online.

How do I access NPRI information?

Environment Canada houses the release reports online at http://www.ec.gc.ca/pdb/npri/npri_home_e.cfm. The database of reports is searchable by location such as a street or even a town, chemical, or facility name. Another option is to visit www.pollutionwatch.org which tends to a more user friendly website. Pollution Watch has most of the same search functions as the Environment Canada website with some additions. Pollution Watch allows you to create your own reports showing release trends over a number of years and provides summaries of the health effects caused by different pollutants reported on the NPRI.

What information does the NPRI leave out?

Companies are required to report depending on number of employees and amount of toxins. The list of reportable chemicals is limited to a few hundred substances. Facilities that have to report are also limited due to exemptions to education sectors (i.e. nuclear reactor at U of T) and certain industry sectors (i.e. drilling and mining companies). Only companies with 10+ employees, using more than 10 tonnes of listed substances and in concentrations greater than one percent are required to report to the NPRI. Many facilities and releases fall under these thresholds.

Why is NPRI information useful?

Pollution Watch allows you to cross-reference polluters by company name and substances used. This allows the user to identify polluters in their area. Residents can target companies to take action against or to work with them in reducing and eliminating listed substances.

What has release information been used for in the past?

In the United States, communities in Ohio and Oregon have used similar information to identify companies to confront and call for reduction and elimination of toxic chemicals. In Ohio, Cincinnati Specialties built a chlorine enclosure to prevent accidents, Morton International made a 90 per cent reduction in chloromethane reductions; and Brush Wellman reduced beryllium releases to the air by 96 per cent. All of these communities initiated reduction agreements that imposed much stricter requirements than state or federal regulations.