

NAS agrees with NTP Report on Carcinogen listing decisions

By Robin Mackar

New reports from the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) find that the National Toxicology Program (NTP) listings of styrene and formaldehyde, in the 12th Report on Carcinogens (RoC) (<http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/pubhealth/roc/index.html>) published in 2011, are accurate and appropriate.

The separate reports were developed after Congress directed the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to arrange for NAS to independently review the 12th RoC substance profiles of styrene and formaldehyde. NAS began work in September 2012.

The RoC is a science-based document that identifies cancer hazards. It is a cumulative report, prepared by NTP on behalf of the HHS Secretary.

"We appreciate the efforts of these two committees, convened by the NAS, and are very pleased with these supportive outcomes," said NIEHS and NTP Director Linda Birnbaum, Ph.D.

Styrene

The NAS committee that reviewed the styrene assessment in the 12th RoC released its final [report](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=18725) (http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=18725) July 28.

After conducting both a peer review and an independent assessment of the styrene literature, the committee found that the overall conclusion reached by NTP in 2011, that styrene is reasonably anticipated to be a human carcinogen, is appropriate.

Styrene is an industrial chemical used to reinforce plastic and rubber products. The listing of styrene in the RoC was based on levels of styrene that workers are exposed to in an industrial setting.

Formaldehyde

A separate NAS committee focused on formaldehyde. Their final [report](http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=18948), (http://www.nap.edu/catalog.php?record_id=18948) released Aug. 8, upheld the 12th RoC listing of formaldehyde.

The committee agreed with the NTP determination that evidence from studies in humans for nasopharyngeal cancer, sinonasal cancer, and myeloid leukemia was sufficient to support listing formaldehyde as a known human carcinogen.

As with the styrene report, the committee conducted both a peer review of the NTP formaldehyde assessment and an independent assessment of the literature.

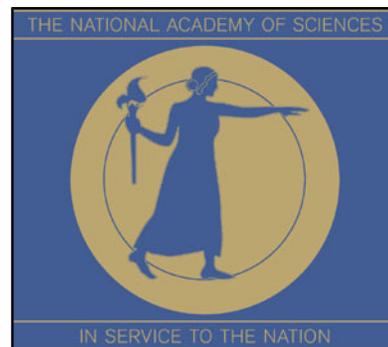
Formaldehyde is a major industrial chemical used in building materials, chemical manufacturing, and other industries.

Well-placed public trust

"The Report on Carcinogens has always had a high level of public trust," said NTP associate director John Bucher, Ph.D. "These two reports from the National Academy of Sciences confirm that public trust and confidence in NTP's rigorous scientific review process is well-placed."

Several of the recommendations made by the committee have already been put in place, as NTP continues reviewing candidate substances for possible listing in the RoC.

(Robin Mackar is the news director in the NIEHS Office of Communications and Public Liaison and a regular contributor to the Environmental Factor.)



Ruth Lunn, Dr.P.H., director of the NTP Office of the Report on Carcinogens, along with her staff and NTP leadership, ensures a rigorous scientific review process for all NTP evaluations. (Photo courtesy of Steve McCaw)

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