

# Research to Risk Assessment Interagency Working Group

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The NIEHS Superfund Research Program is leading an ongoing communication network to establish and support collaborations that (1) introduce new science for application to site risk assessments and (2) provide academic researchers with the opportunity to work with environmental health practitioners to see that their research findings are applied to improve human and environmental public health.

The *Research to Risk Assessment (R2RA) Interagency Working Group* includes senior staff and managers from NIEHS, EPA Headquarters and Regional offices, and the ATSDR. The Working Group (WG) interacts via conference call and webinars to discuss priority issues and to identify topics of mutual interest to the WG and the SRP grantee community. Small topic-specific groups have been formed to address the priority issues identified by WG members. These groups include subject matter experts from the SRP grantee community as well as EPA and ATSDR. For example:

***Airborne PCBs in Public Schools:*** The WG is addressing a concern from EPA Region 2 resulting from elevated levels of PCBs in a New York City public school. The EPA needs data regarding the airborne route of exposure to PCBs from a variety of sources in the schools and how to best derive a safe level of airborne PCBs. EPA and University of Iowa SRP-funded researchers collaborated closely to investigate source attribution and designed a lab study with the goal of reducing the uncertainty factors associated with the application of the RfC.

***Vapor Intrusion:*** Several R2RA WG members expressed interest in working with SRP grantees at the Brown University Center who are developing and field testing mathematical models for the characterization of vapor intrusion of hazardous materials from in-ground sources. WG members from ATSDR are working with the researchers on site-specific projects, providing real-world data for the researchers to test and improve their models, and also benefiting from the SRP grantee's expertise in review of site data.

***Fish Advisory Network*** was established to share research and information on fish advisories, consumption, and fish trade programs at Superfund sites. Participants include SRP grantees and staff from across EPA and ATSDR. The interactions of the group provide EPA and ATSDR with information about resources and expertise available from the SRP grantee community and provide SRP grantees with information about activities, procedures, and expertise residing within EPA and ATSDR.

***Passive Sediment Sampler*** to better assess the hazards posed by contaminated sediment sites.

***Lead Contaminated Soil Treatment with Phosphate Amendments:*** SRP grantees and EPA risk assessors collaborated to discuss effectiveness and challenges of the use of phosphate amendments to treat lead-contaminated soils at hazardous waste sites. They organized sessions at the American Chemical Society Environmental Chemistry and prepared a manuscript for publication in *Environmental Public Health*.

***Technical Assistance on Study Design of a Contaminated Sediment Site*** was provided to an EPA regional office to help focus their longer term science needs at a hazardous waste site.

***Enhanced Understanding of EPA and ATSDR Science Needs*** was promoted by developing webinars focused on the informational needs of SRP researchers. EPA experts presented information on the history, science, and policies of Superfund sites and an overview of human health risk assessment.

***In Summary:*** This model of cross agency collaboration between NIEHS SRP, EPA and ATSDR has resulted in the establishment of projects proven to be mutually beneficial to both the environmental health practitioners and the academic researchers. SRP appreciates the active support of EPA and ATSDR in evolving the R2RA to be a standing working group, and is committed to providing leadership to foster continued collaborations.