

VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

**Advisory: Health Information Related to International Paper Mill Tire Burn**

**TO:** Health care providers in Rutland, Addison and Chittenden Counties

**FROM:** Dr. Cort Lohff, State Epidemiologist  
Vermont Department of Health

**DATE:** November 1, 2006

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- **PLEASE DISTRIBUTE WIDELY** -

- The International Paper mill in Ticonderoga, NY has been permitted by New York State’s environmental agency to conduct a two-week test burn of tires for fuel. While the State of Vermont is doing everything legally possible to stop the burn it is now scheduled to begin on Monday November 6.
- Although the mill may meet federal and New York State emissions standards, the mill does not have state-of-the-art pollution control devices in place. As such, the test burn may increase the levels of particulate matter in the air. Studies have shown that a tire burn such as this could cause an increase in zinc oxide and other harmful particulates over what is currently emitted from the stack. Particulates have been shown to be associated with exacerbations of heart and lung disease.
- At this time there is no reason to recommend that Vermonters – including the very young, the very old, pregnant women and those with pre-existing lung disease – take any special precautions. However, should information suggest there is a public health risk, the Vermont Department of Health will alert the public and provide specific recommendations.
- Although it is not possible to accurately predict the health risk to Vermonters, as a precaution, the Vermont Department of Health has established a medical surveillance program to monitor for health effects.
  - The medical surveillance program will utilize an existing *syndromic surveillance* system currently in place at Rutland Regional Medical Center and Fletcher Allen Health Care in Burlington. This system – referred to as Vermont’s Early Aberration Reporting System (VT EARS) – tracks syndromes among patients presenting to the emergency departments as well as among those with unplanned admissions.
  - Additionally, a new surveillance system modeled after VT EARS has been established at Porter Medical Center in Middlebury as well as in several outpatient clinics in Addison County.

## VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

- In order to accurately assess the health impact of the test burn, data from this medical surveillance program will need to be correlated with environmental data collected by the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation. As this assessment will take several weeks to complete, this medical surveillance program will not likely be able to detect, on a real-time basis, increases in illness that may be related to the burn. **As such, health-care providers are encouraged to report any unusual increases in health outcomes by calling the Vermont Department of Health at 802 863-7240 (24/7).**

For questions about this Advisory call the Vermont Department of Health at 802-863-7240 or 1-800-244-7639 (within Vermont).