

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) identifies the most serious hazardous waste sites in the nation. These sites make up the National Priorities List (NPL) and are the sites targeted for long-term federal cleanup activities. Aldrin has been found in at least 207 of the 1,613 current or former NPL sites, and dieldrin has been found in at least 287 of the 1,613 current or former NPL sites. However, the total number of NPL sites evaluated for these substances is not known. As more sites are evaluated, the sites at which aldrin and dieldrin are found may increase. This information is important because exposure to these substances may harm you and because these sites may be sources of exposure.

1.2 What happens to aldrin and dieldrin when they enter the environment?

Aldrin and dieldrin can enter the environment from accidental spills or leaks from storage containers at waste sites. In the past, aldrin and dieldrin entered the environment when farmers used these compounds to kill pests on crops and when exterminators used them to kill termites. Aldrin and dieldrin are still present in the environment from these past uses. Sunlight and bacteria in the environment can change aldrin to dieldrin. Therefore, you can find dieldrin in places where aldrin was originally released. Dieldrin in soil or water breaks down (degrades) very slowly. Dieldrin sticks to soil and may stay there unchanged for many years. Water does not easily wash dieldrin off soil. Dieldrin does not dissolve in water very well and is therefore not found in water at high concentrations. Most dieldrin in the environment attaches to soil and to sediments at the bottoms of lakes, ponds, and streams. Dieldrin can travel large distances by attaching to dust particles, which can then be transported great distances by the wind. Dieldrin can evaporate slowly from surface water or soil. In the air, dieldrin changes to photodieldrin within a few days. Plants can take up dieldrin from the soil and store it in their leaves and roots. Fish or animals that eat dieldrin-contaminated materials store a large amount of the dieldrin in their fat. Animals or fish that eat other animals have levels of dieldrin in their fat many times higher than animals or fish that eat plants. For more information, see Chapters 5 and 6.

EPA has named aldrin and dieldrin as hazardous solid waste materials. If quantities greater than 1 pound enter the environment, the National Response Center of the federal government must be told immediately.

REF: <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/phs1.html>