

Air, water experts not concerned about local environmental impact after train derailment

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Air and water quality experts at The University of Toledo say you need

not be concerned about local air and water quality after a train derailment carrying hazardous materials earlier this month in East Palestine, Ohio, near the Pennsylvania state line.

The UToledo science and engineering [faculty members](#) doubt any of the chemicals spilled into the environment nearly 200 miles away would even be detectable in Toledo and northwest Ohio because the city doesn't get water from the Ohio River and prevailing winds are from west to east, which would carry any [airborne chemicals](#) in the opposite direction.

"The spill area is in a different watershed far away, so there is no reason to think our surface or groundwater could become contaminated by the spill," said Dr. Thomas Bridgeman, a professor of ecology and director of the UToledo Lake Erie Center.

Air quality experts say the chemicals involved have a "short half-life," and, therefore, will not stay in the atmosphere for long.

"Atmospheric dispersion of chemicals due to wind is helping in the dilution of chemicals after the accident," said Dr. Ashok Kumar, Distinguished University Professor Emeritus of civil and environmental engineering. "The public will face very low concentrations now since the chemicals are no longer being released in the atmosphere."

Kumar said some of the chemicals involved in the incident may cause health issues due to inhalation. For example, vinyl chloride could cause dizziness, nausea, headache, visual disturbances and other health issues depending on the concentration levels.

Kumar said, however, air monitoring around the train derailment site has not detected any levels of concern about the chemicals since the fire went out. Plus, vinyl chloride or [hydrogen chloride](#) have not been detected during indoor air quality screenings of more than 500 homes.

Provided by University of Toledo

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