

Press Statement by  
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**Reverse Osmosis Plant Grand Cay Abaco is a Terrible Disaster and Major Health Risk to residences of Grand Cay Abaco.**

Jr. Minister Phenton Neymour boldly claimed that the water produced by the RO Plant in Grand Cay is safe for drinking and that the foul odour caused Hydrogen Sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S) would be resolved by December 31st 2010.

As of this afternoon, the people of Grand Cay Abaco represented by Prime Minister Hubert A Ingraham MP continue to be provided with foul smelling water which they are unable to consume. Contrary to the assertion by the Water & Sewerage Corporation that Hydrogen Sulphide (H<sub>2</sub>S) is harmless; kindly see below an explanation of the origin of this material which is describe as being highly toxic.

The Progressive Liberal Party again invite the Government to without further delay, to immediately come to the rescue of the good people of Grand Cay and discontinue this massive cover up of negligence and incompetence.

**Hydrogen Sulphide Gas**

Hydrogen sulphide gas is also known as "sewer gas" because it is often produced by the breakdown of waste material. At low levels, hydrogen sulphide gas has a strong odour similar to rotten eggs. You can smell hydrogen sulphide gas at lower levels than may cause health effects, so smelling the gas does not always mean that it will make you sick. However, at higher levels, your nose can become overwhelmed by the gas and you cannot smell it. At higher levels, hydrogen sulphide gas can make you sick and could be fatal.

***What is hydrogen sulphide gas?***

Hydrogen sulphide gas occurs naturally in crude petroleum, natural gas, volcanic gases and hot springs. It can also result from bacterial breakdown of organic matter and be produced by human and animal wastes.

Hydrogen sulphide gas also can result from industrial activities, such as food processing, coke ovens, craft paper mills, tanneries and petroleum refineries.

Hydrogen sulphide is colourless, flammable gas under normal conditions. It is commonly known as hydrosulphuric acid, stink damp and sewer gas.

***How can I be exposed to hydrogen sulphide gas?***

The main way you can be exposed to hydrogen sulphide gas is by breathing it. You also can be exposed to hydrogen sulphide gas through skin and eye contact.

Exposure to hydrogen sulphide gas can occur in the home and in the workplace. In the home, exposure may occur because of faulty plumbing. Sewer drains that have dry traps can allow hydrogen sulphide gas to enter the home.

Workers involved in occupations such as livestock farming, sewage treatment and oil refining may be exposed to hydrogen sulphide gas at work. If you live in a neighbourhood near these types of industry, you could be exposed to hydrogen sulphide by breathing the gas released into the air from activities at these facilities.

***How can hydrogen sulphide gas affect my health?***

Hydrogen sulphide can affect several different systems in the body. Exposure to lower concentrations can cause eye irritation, a sore throat and cough, shortness of breath and fluid in the lungs. These symptoms usually go away in a few weeks after exposure ends. Long-term, low-level exposure may result in fatigue, loss of appetite, headaches, irritability, poor memory and dizziness. Breathing very high levels of hydrogen sulphide can cause death within just a few breaths. There could be a loss of consciousness after one or more breaths. This high level of exposure would not be expected in a home, but could occur in a workplace.

***How can I reduce my exposure to hydrogen sulphide gas?***

Exposure to hydrogen sulphide gas can be reduced or prevented by ensuring that plumbing fixtures and pipes are installed and maintained properly. In homes where hydrogen sulphide gas is present, you can reduce the level of gas by locating and eliminating the source.

Plumbers licensed by the Illinois Department of Public Health may be able to help with correcting problems associated with hydrogen sulphide gas.

If you live in a neighbourhood impacted by industrial emissions of hydrogen sulphide, go inside and close doors and windows when odours are strong outside. When outdoor odours are high, you also may want to avoid outdoor activities such as jogging or yard work.

Workers who may be exposed to hydrogen sulphide gas should follow the guidelines established by the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). OSHA has established confined space entry standards to prevent death from exposure to chemicals like hydrogen sulphide gas.

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