

Toluene (C₇H₈)

What is Toluene?

Toluene is a clear, colorless liquid with a distinctive smell. It is a good solvent (a substance that can dissolve other substances). Toluene occurs naturally in crude oil and in the tolu tree. It is produced in the process of making gasoline and other fuels from crude oil and in making coke from coal.

Does Toluene have any additional names?

Methylbenzene

What are the known health effects?

Some people who drink water containing toluene well in excess of the MCL over many years could have problems with their nervous system, kidneys, or liver.

How does exposure occur?

Toluene is not frequently detected in drinking water or food. Exposure may occur by breathing contaminated workplace air or automobile exhaust. Individuals who work with gasoline, paint, lacquer, or dyes have greater exposure to Toluene, as do individuals who smoke or intentionally inhale products containing Toluene for its euphoric effects or to get high.

Is this contaminant regulated?

Yes, and water supplied to Mount Laurel MUA customers is in compliance with USEPA and NJDEP requirements. The maximum concentration of Toluene permitted in drinking water is 1000 ppb; water supplied by the MLTMUA system has not reported any detections of Toluene.

How can I reduce exposure?

Toluene in drinking water can be removed at point of use by granular activated charcoal filtration.

Additional information regarding Toluene, including the information referenced, can be found at:

<https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-09/documents/toluene.pdf>

<https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxprofiles/tp56.pdf>