



# Media News Release

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## **British Columbia Ministry of Environment releases its 2011-2012 Prince George Neighborhood Volatile Organic Compound (Air Quality) Sampling Program Report**

**For Immediate Release** (Prince George, BC) – The British Columbia Ministry of Environment released the 2011-2012 Prince George Neighborhood Volatile Organic Compound Sampling Program Report on August 12, 2013. The report summarizes details on outdoor air compound concentration within an odour-affected neighborhood in Prince George, BC.

“The report does not identify any Volatile Organic Compound concentrations high enough to likely result in adverse health effects among the general population; however, it does indicate that levels of acrolein, one of the 194 compounds measured, may have contributed to odour and discomfort for residents in the study area,” says Terry Robert Executive Director of the Prince George Air Improvement Roundtable.

“Very little is known about the potential combined effects of these compounds” reports Terry Robert, “now that more information on the diversity and concentration of these compounds is emerging, emitters and regulators will work towards integrating the report findings into their emission management strategies.”

The Prince George Air Improvement Roundtable would like to invite public and agency comments on the report. For more information and to submit comments please visit [www.pgairquality.com](http://www.pgairquality.com) or call 250-612-0252 to speak with a PGAIR representative.

***Please refer to page 2 of the release for additional details.***

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The PGAIR Society is a group representing a broad spectrum of the community; including the public, government, industry, health agencies, UNBC, PACHA, commercial and transportation sectors. PGAIR is working towards continuous improvement of the air quality within the Prince George airshed, and coordinates various programs and communication initiatives in support of this effort. PGAIR also coordinates research and provides science-based recommendations to various stakeholders and decision making bodies to help improve air quality.

**Key points from the report:**

- Ministry of Environment staff and city residents living within odour-affected neighborhoods in Prince George collected outdoor air samples for 194 Volatile Organic Compounds. Volatile Organic Compounds are a large class of compounds that contain at least one carbon and one hydrogen atom. They are emitted from a wide variety of sources, both natural (e.g. trees, plants and volcanoes) and anthropogenic (e.g. industry, vehicles, paint, and personal products).
- Of the 194 compounds examined, Acrolein is the only compound that exceeded the acute Reference Exposure Level set by the California Protection Agency's Office of Environmental Health and Hazard Assessment (Note: British Columbia does not currently have ambient air quality objectives or screening levels for the compounds monitored in this project).
- Acrolein readings above the acute Reference Exposure Level do not necessarily indicate that health effects will occur but signal the need for a more in-depth review.
- Acrolein has an intensive acrid odour and is considered a tissue irritant (e.g. eyes, nasal passage, and respiratory tract). Acrolein is produced by vehicles (particularly diesel), aircrafts, oil and gas industries, pulp and paper mills, residential wood burning, forest fires, cigarette smoke, and heated cooking oil.

**Related Resources:**

- *2011-2012 Prince George Neighborhood Volatile Organic Compound Sampling Program Report*. British Columbia Ministry of Environment.  
<http://www.bcairquality.ca/reports/prince-george-VOC-sampling.html>
- *Acrolein Frequently Asked Questions – August 13, 2013*. Northern Health Authority.  
[http://northernhealth.ca/Portals/0/Your\\_Health/Programs/EnvironmentalHealth/documents/AcroleinFaq.pdf](http://northernhealth.ca/Portals/0/Your_Health/Programs/EnvironmentalHealth/documents/AcroleinFaq.pdf)
- *The Sweet Acrid Poison Acrolein*. Peoples Action Committee for Healthy Air.  
<http://www.pachapg.ca>

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