

Community Fact Sheet

Prepared by Duwamish River Cleanup Coalition 10/1/2019

ARDAGH GLASS COMPANY

Ardagh is a glass recycling and packing plant located in Georgetown in South Seattle's Duwamish Valley. They are the largest glass recycler in North America and have been operating in South Seattle for more than 10 years. Nearly 200K tons of glass is processed at their facility receiving 30-50 trucks of glass per day. It operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They employ about 30 unionized employees at the Georgetown facility. Their combined operations are the receiving point for 100% of King County and Seattle's curbside recycling programs.

HEALTH IN THE DUWAMISH VALLEY

Residents of the Duwamish Valley are disproportionately exposed to contamination relative to other communities in the City of Seattle. People who live in Georgetown and South Park have some of the highest health differences in the City of Seattle.

Childhood asthma hospitalization rates are the highest in the City.

Heart disease death rates are 1.5 times higher than the rest of Seattle and King County.

Life expectancy is 13 years shorter when compared to wealthier neighborhoods and 8 years shorter when compared to the Seattle and King County average (Gould, Cummings – DV Cumulative Health Impact Analysis (2013))



WHY IT MATTERS?

The Duwamish Valley has been designated as a community with environmental injustices- a community with disproportionately high environmental health burdens and risks and fewer positive environmental benefits than the rest of Seattle. The neighborhood around the Duwamish River is generally low income, with high proportions of people of color and immigrant communities. The Duwamish Valley is also home to Seattle's largest industrial and maritime trade centers and is bisected by three highways and the Duwamish River Superfund site. The Superfund cleanup cannot be completed until industries, like Ardagh, stop polluting the River.

Environmental & Health Impacts

Air Violations:

- In 2015, the Puget Sound Clean Air Agency (PSCAA) issued Ardagh a regulatory order to follow Clean Air Act Standards. Despite the regulatory order, Ardagh continues to violate air emission standards and has received multiple civil penalty letters from PSCAA including 2019.
- The PSCAA enforcement actions have been for particulate matter (<PM10 um) violations. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) maintains a website called ECHO (Enforcement and Compliance History Online). On ECHO, Ardagh has a history of multiple “high priority” violations for which they have been penalized a total of \$91,000.
- EPA maintains a tool called the Risk-Screening Environmental Indicators (RSEI) which, along with the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) tracks the amount of toxic chemicals released as well as facts such as the chemical’s fate that transport through the environment related to toxicity.
- According to RSEI, Ardagh Glass is one of Seattle’s top emitters for lead and chromium. It accounts for about 90% of the City’s relative risk for inhaling toxic contaminants (Abel, White, Clauson, 2019) for two chemicals -chromium and lead.

Water violations:

According to the WA Department of Ecology (ECY), Ardagh has received warning letters for non-compliance with industrial stormwater permits in 2019.

- According to EPA’s TRI data base, Ardagh has a history of “significant violations” for the last 12 quarters. Some of the pollutant violations included total copper, total zinc, total suspended solids, turbidity, oil, grease, and pH.
- The Clean Water Act prohibits anyone from discharging pollutants through an outfall into a “water of the United States” unless they have a NPDES permit.
- The contamination discharging from Ardagh outfall can harm fish and wildlife.

How can these issues impact my health?

The size of particles (particulate matter, PM) is directly linked to their potential for causing health problems. Small particles less than 10 micrometers in diameter pose the greatest problems, because they can get deep into your lungs, and some may even get into your bloodstream. Exposure to such particles can affect both your lungs and your heart. Numerous scientific studies have linked particle pollution exposure to a variety of problems, including:

- premature death in people with heart or lung disease
- non-fatal heart attacks
- irregular heartbeat
- aggravated asthma
- decreased lung function
- Increased respiratory symptoms, such as irritation of the airways, coughing or difficulty breathing.

People with heart or lung diseases, children, and older adults are the most likely to be affected by particle pollution exposure.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- We recommend that Ardagh stop violating air emission standards under the Federal Clean Air Act
- We recommend that Ardagh can do this by installing bag house (air filtration systems) technology.
- We recommend Ardagh stop violating the Clean Water Act and WA state surface water standards to the Duwamish River through its outfalls.
- We recommend that Ardagh use Best Management practices protecting the health of Duwamish Valley neighbors.
- We recommend that Ardagh establish a Good Neighbor Agreement with the community.

Questions for DRCC or our science advisors can be directed to Paulina Lopez at contact@duwamishcleanup.org

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