



HEALTH REQUIREMENTS FOR REOPENING BEACHES IMPACTED BY THE ERIKA OIL SPILL TO THE PUBLIC IN LOIRE-ATLANTIQUE

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ABSTRACT

Prior the opening of beaches to the public for the year 2000 holiday season, were established on national level a risk assesment study, the organization of management and information rules. The risk assesment study was accomplished by INERIS (National Institute for the Industrial Environment and Risks) and InVS (National Institute for Public Health Surveillance) following a campaign of sample collection made in april 2001 on 36 cleaned beaches from the five departments affected by the oil spill as well as five beaches which weren't affected. The study wich was carried out in relation to five exposition scenarios and results from 16 PAH (Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons) analyses defined by US-EPA (US-Environmental Protection Agency). Concerning the carcinogenic effects, this study concluded that the risk is negligible given the conditions of exposure, which doesn't exceed that occuring in normal daily life when individuals are in contact with hydrocarbons and a particular risk was mentioned concerning contact with polluted rocks as well as the validity of opening beaches on the basis of visual inspection. Rules for the management of the opening of beaches to be carried out by the DDASS (Local Health Authorities) were defined by the French Minister for Health. In Loire Atlantique, 93 beaches were inspected for their "state of health" by a visiting group piloted by the DDASS and national information notices "Erika Oil Pollution" were posted at the entry of each beach. In parallel, an Internet site was put on line and more than a million information leaflets "the beaches following the Erika shipwreck- advice for healthy holidays" were distributed. The inspection of 93 beaches carried out between 30 May an 17 August 2000 represented 56 days of work and 131 field visits for the DDASS of Loire Atlantique. After these inspections, only 10 beaches were not opened to the public. During the holiday season, 7 PAH research campaigns concerning sea water were carried out between 15 June and 15 September 2000. Only 45 samples out of 504 taken showed a value higher than 200 ng/l. 13 press statements were published and less than five complaints were recorded by the DDASS without controversy.