



ROCKDALE COUNTY PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release
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Rockdale County Provides Critical Update on Ongoing Biolab Incident

ROCKDALE COUNTY, Ga. – Rockdale County held a press conference today to provide updates on the ongoing Biolab incident. Rockdale County Chairman Oz Nesbitt Sr., Conyers Mayor Vince Evans, along with representatives from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Georgia Emergency Management Agency (GEMA), Lynn Paxton, the Interim Director for Gwinnett, Newton, and Rockdale Health District, and key County Leadership, including the Rockdale EMA Director and Fire Chief, addressed the public. They reassured the community that efforts were underway to manage the emergency swiftly and safely.

At 3:30 a.m., on Oct. 1, 2024, a notification came in from operations at Biolab that a plume was hovering over the county because of over-gassing of the product. The plume has been moving across the county, influenced by the weather. The EPA has been actively monitoring air quality. Residents are urged to shelter in place if the plume or smell of chlorine is over their area until the cloud has passed. This is especially critical for individuals with respiratory conditions. It is essential to stay aware of the wind shifts. Due to inversion, the plume is more prone to shift during the evening, and it is recommended to stay inside during evening hours if possible and keep emergency alert notifications on your phone active.

Biolab leadership is collaborating with Rockdale County Fire Services are working to neutralize and contain the chemical plume as efficiently as possible. The process involves controlled efforts to minimize the plume's impact. The EPA and other officials have been fully briefed on the strategy. Health officials confirmed that air quality levels remain below thresholds, which would cause harm to the general public.

The EPA is monitoring air quality in real-time, and residents can access updates through the EPA website at epa.gov/current-events.

Water Safety:

Rockdale County's drinking water remains safe. Water samples are being tested three times daily, and all results have returned safe levels. Streams downstream from the Biolab facility do not feed into the Hanes Watershed, a source of the county's drinking water.

Health Recommendations:

Air conditions will fluctuate throughout the day and evening. Being outdoors during daylight hours is generally safe, but those with pre-existing respiratory conditions should remain indoors. If you need to conduct essential business or gather supplies, do so during the day and remain vigilant about wind shifts. Due to evening atmospheric inversion, the plume is more likely to shift during nighttime hours. It is

recommended that residents stay indoors after sundown and ensure emergency notifications are active on mobile devices.

Facility Closures: In the interest of public safety, Rockdale County Government offices, including the Courthouse and annexes, will be closed for the remainder of the week.

Important Contact Information and Information Resources:

- For non-emergency inquiries, please call the Rockdale EMA hotline:
- For poison-related concerns non-emergency, Georgia Poison Control has set up a special hotline:
- 404-856-6252.
- Air Quality Monitoring, visit epa.gov/current events
- GNR public website for ongoing recommendations and updates
- Rockdale County Website, www.rockdalecountyga.gov
- Rockdale County Facebook, www.facebook.com/RockdaleGov

We appreciate the community's continued cooperation and patience.

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