

Pesticide Exposure Fatality File



Man dies after exposure to industrial pesticide in Wayne County

The Wayne Community Health Center in Bicknell, Wayne County, was closed after a person was taken there and died after being exposed to industrial pesticide material on Sunday, June 17, 2018. Kassidee Brown, Wayne County

BICKNELL, Wayne County – A man has died following exposure to an industrial pesticide material, officials said, and the incident led to temporary closure of a medical clinic.

The man, identified as George Coombs, 70, of Teasdale, encountered the material in a home in Teasdale about 7:45 p.m. on Sunday. He was then taken to the Wayne Community Health Center in Bicknell, where he died, according to Kassidee Brown, spokeswoman for Wayne County.

Everyone within the home where Coombs was exposed to the pesticide was evaluated for contamination, Brown said. Investigators also evaluated the building itself, she said.

Medical staff who helped the victim were taken to other medical facilities to be evaluated and were given a clear bill of health, Brown said.

The Wayne Community Health Center clinic was closed during “investigation and evaluation of this incident,” according to Brown, and a small temporary clinic was set up during the investigation.

The civil support team of the Utah National Guard 85th Weapons of Mass Destruction support team, which was investigating, found the clinic safe Monday afternoon and it reopened at 3 p.m., she said.

The team found that the pesticide Coombs was exposed to was aluminum phosphide. “It is unclear how or why the pesticide was used,” Brown said.

Aluminum phosphide is described by the U.S. National Library of Medicine as “one of the most common causes of poisoning among agricultural pesticides.”