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Strong interest in dioxin legal action[Print](#) | [Send to friend](#) | [Email update](#)

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More than 450 people may be interested in taking legal action over dioxin contamination in Taranaki.

A Wellington law firm, Johnston Lawrence, is contacting people to find out the basis of each of their claims and what details they have of alleged contamination.

Roger Chapman, a partner in the firm, says some claims concern dioxin emissions from the Dow AgroChemical plant in New Plymouth which manufactured 245-T until 1987.

He says others believe that dioxin may be leaking into the environment from toxic waste dumps around the city.

Meanwhile, campaigners want the agrochemical company Dow AgroSciences to help with the investigation and clean up of sites in Taranaki which may be contaminated by dioxins.

The Taranaki Regional Council has drawn up a list of over 25 sites which may be contaminated and it is considering whether they warrant further investigation.

The council says more than 60 residents have sent in information on possible dump sites.

Andrew Gibbs, a spokesman for the environmental group Dioxin Information Network, says he knows of at least one site which is underneath a residential house.

The council's director of resource management, Bill Bayfield, says it is far too early to say how many of these locations are actually contaminated.

Bayfield says a council subcommittee will meet on May 2 to decide which of the likely sites should be investigated further.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Health says it will probably be July at the earliest before blood testing of up to 100 New Plymouth residents begins.

The testing is an attempt to determine whether dioxin emissions from the Dow AgroChemical plant, which produced the pesticide 245-T until 1987, are linked to claims of ill-health in the surrounding suburb of Paritutu.

The Ministry for the Environment says legally any investigation costs fall on the regional council and the land-owners.

But long-time campaigner Andrew Gibbs says Dow AgroSciences should help pay for the investigation and clean-up work. He says it is Dow's chemicals which cause the contamination and they have a moral obligation to assist.

Dow operations manager Jim Guidarini says the company has no information on toxic dump sites other than ones which have already been fixed up.



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