



Community statement on BioLab Fire

Officials from throughout Newton County are working together to ensure the safest path forward for our community during the persisting effects of Sunday's BioLab fire in Rockdale County.

Smoke from the fire continues to produce odor and irritants into Newton County. Newton County leaders and community partners discussed a wide range of topics concerning the ever-changing circumstances related to this matter.

Newton County Government (Chairman and County Manager), Newton County Schools (Superintendent and school officials), Newton County Emergency Management Agency, Newton County Water and Sewerage Authority, county mayors of multiple municipalities (Covington and Porterdale), State Representatives, and community partners such as the Newton County Chamber of Commerce as well as the Newton County Industrial Development Authority discussed a wide range of topics concerning the ever-changing circumstances related to this matter.

Officials want to ensure Newton County that we are aware of the seriousness associated with this issue.

While we are utilizing the information at our disposal from our partners, we do feel the need to receive more details from state and federal agencies in order to best serve our community. We realize the situation is fluid and we will provide updates of constant developments.

We are aware that in our community, particularly those vulnerable to chemicals such as chlorine and those that have pre-existing conditions, are experiencing some difficulties. We encourage all residents to take the necessary precautions to remain safe if you are experiencing any health-related issues.

Newton County's leaders recognize the need for a safe community above all else.

- We have reviewed the levels of chemicals that are being monitored in close proximity to the incident (Rockdale County). This is where the most concentrated levels are found.

- We are reviewing weather trends of the region to assess wind conditions, with the understanding that the denser evening and morning air will push plumes lower to ground level.
- We have consulted with medical officials and encourage anyone experiencing health-related symptoms to contact their medical provider or contact the Georgia Poison Center at 404-856-6252.
- We have assessed our water supply by way of testing and there are no signs that the water has been compromised as a result of this situation.
- Newton County Schools are evaluating the safest path forward for all students, their parents and staff to resume normal school operations

County officials are collaborating around the clock. A change in any of the conditions will be addressed immediately. We will post updates at 6 p.m., 9 p.m. and midnight and again Wednesday, Oct.2

In attendance Tuesday were elected officials Ga. Rep. D114 Tim Fleming, Newton County Chairman Lanier Sims, City of Covington Mayor Fleeta Baggett and Porterdale Mayor Michael Patterson; Community leaders Newton County Manager Harold Cooper, City of Covington Manager Tres Thomas, Chamber of Commerce President Debbie Harper, IDA Executive Director Serra Hall, Water and Sewerage Authority Director Mike Hopkins and EMA Director Wendy Patterson.

