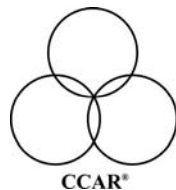


INDUSTRY CONCERNS
REGARDING HANDLING,
DISPOSAL AND REPAIR
OF FLOODED VEHICLES
FROM NEW ORLEANS
FOLLOWING
HURRICANE KATRINA

Analysis of risk to workers
and vulnerability of persons coming in contact
with submerged or flooded vehicles

EDITION 1.4
POSTED: OCTOBER 7, 2005



COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR

OVERVIEW

HURRICANE KATRINA HAS AFFECTED MORE VEHICLES THAN ANY OTHER CATASTROPHE PREVIOUSLY FACED BY THE INSURANCE, TOW, COLLISION REPAIR, AUTO RECYCLING AND MECHANICAL SERVICE SEGMENTS OF THE AUTO REPAIR INDUSTRY, AS WELL AS THE FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES THAT REGULATE THE INDUSTRY.

DUE TO THE EXTRAORDINARY MIX OF WATER, POLLUTANTS AND BIOLOGICAL HAZARDS IN THE FLOODWATERS OF NEW ORLEANS, VARIOUS MEMBERS OF THE INDUSTRY HAVE REQUESTED A SYNOPSIS THAT ADDRESSES HANDLING CONCERNS AND PROCEDURES. THIS DOCUMENT ATTEMPTS TO PROVIDE THAT INFORMATION.

DISCLAIMER: DUE TO THE SPEED OF DEVELOPING EVENTS AND INPUT FROM VARIOUS INDUSTRY SEGMENTS, THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT BE ALL ENCOMPASSING OR WHOLLY ACCURATE. BEST PRACTICES AND OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS ARE EXPECTED TO EMERGE, AND THIS DOCUMENT MAY BE UPDATED AS NECESSARY.

THIS IS THE FOURTH VERSION OF THIS DOCUMENT TO BE POSTED.

Subsequent versions will be posted at www.ccar-greenlink.org.

In addition to the organizations listed under “Additional Information” on page 9, the following have provided input for this document:

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services-Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
- Kansas Department of Health & Environment
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and U.S. EPA Region 7 Office
- Louisiana Department of Public Safety, Office of Motor Vehicles
- Natalie Schoonover and Rod Enlow, Coordinating Committee For Automotive Repair

The Coordinating Committee For Automotive Repair is a national 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation, established in 1994, and its affiliates represent all segments of the automotive industry. CCAR®’s mission is to work with the industry around the world, with career and technical schools, and with governments and other organizations to provide best practice information and training, and to measure improvements related to:

- **Pollution Prevention (P2).**
- **Safety for all who repair or maintain vehicles as a profession, as well as those who work in related businesses.**
- **Reduction of lost workdays due to accidents or job-related health issues.**
- **Decreases in costs and liability exposure.**
- **Reduction in costs of training in these areas.**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Goals of This Document:

1. To inform companies and workers as to the best practices in handling vehicles coming from the flood waters specific to New Orleans.
2. To inform affected industries that are most likely to come in contact with vehicles from the New Orleans disaster.

Hurricane Katrina: The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has declared Hurricane Katrina, which struck the Gulf Coast on August 29, 2005, to be the most destructive and expensive natural disaster to ever to hit the U.S. The hurricane's storm surge caused breaches in the levees surrounding the city of New Orleans, Louisiana, which allowed water to flow unobstructed into the city and flood an estimated 80% of its area. The New Orleans city proper has a population of approximately 500,000.

Scope: Industry estimates on the number of vehicles destroyed by Hurricane Katrina now exceed 500,000. The number of vehicles affected in New Orleans may surpass 100,000, including both passenger and commercial vehicles. It is clear the storm and subsequent flooding resulted in catastrophic damage to new and used vehicles left behind.

Concern: As of this date, the pumping of water from New Orleans has been completed. Residues of “sludge” cover some streets as much as 12 inches deep, and this sludge is the result of lake water and salt water mixed with sewage, petrochemicals and other pollutants of all types, as well as biological waste that includes animal and human remains. Vehicles with flood damage will have varying levels of residue. Testing of the floodwaters revealed high levels of raw sewage, hexavalent chromium, arsenic and lead.

As was widely reported Escheria coli, (E-coli 0157:h7) has been measured at many times the acceptable level. FEMA, state and local governments have been evaluating the potential for disease among evacuees and within the general population. People who will handle flooded vehicles during removal, repair and/or disposal should be clearly informed of personal risk and illness prevention methods. Each flooded vehicle can potentially carry an extraordinary amount of harmful residue.

If the liquid ingredients of the floodwater had been placed in a container for shipment, by law the container would have to be labeled a Hazardous Material (specifically a biological hazard). *This does not mean that the affected vehicles cannot be practically evaluated and handled. It does mean that the first concern should be the protection of workers who come in contact with the contaminated vehicles and residues. Specific protections and precautionary measures should be employed to assure the safety of workers.*

A statement issued by the U.S. EPA on October 6 said this about the sediment left behind by the flooding in New Orleans: “Sediment samples for September 30, 2005 indicate the continued presence of petroleum products. Arsenic and lead were detected at levels exceeding ATSDR/CDC health guidance values based on ingestion. EPA and ATSDR/CDC [Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry/Centers for Disease Control] conclude that exposures at these levels to emergency responders are not expected to cause adverse health effects as long as

the proper protective equipment is worn such as gloves and safety glasses. Volatile, and semivolatile organic compounds, including polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), as well as pesticides and heavy metals including aluminum, were found, but at levels below what ATSDR/CDC considers to be immediately hazardous to human health. Bacterial contamination consistent with the presence of sewage was also detected. EPA and ATSDR/CDC recommend avoiding all contact with sediment deposited by the flood water, where possible, due to potential concerns associated with long-term skin contact.”

Those Affected: Due to the scope of the disaster, an unprecedented number of vehicles must be handled. Contaminated vehicles and their parts are likely to be distributed over a much larger area than was directly impacted by the hurricane. Government agencies have not yet formalized a plan for holding or handling the vehicles beyond the business practices followed in “typical” flood scenarios.

Consideration and training should be given regarding the safety of those who will come in contact with contaminated vehicles. The potential environmental consequences of dealing with these vehicles have not yet been determined.

Those most impacted are:

- Police/Fire/Rescue
- Military
- Tow and Recovery
- Municipal Employees
- Insurance Claims Staff and Appraisers
- Collision Repair
- Auto Recycling
- Detail/Cleanup
- Automobile Dealerships (new and used)
- Mechanical Repair
- School Transportation (employees and students)

Hierarchical Sequence of Flood Vehicle Impact: In a catastrophe such as Hurricane Katrina, police and military authorities will work their way into the affected areas as the waters recede. Their first objective will be to save lives, then to secure the area from other dangers such as natural gas, gasoline, electrical, chemicals, fire, etc. Following these actions, events related to flooded vehicles become relatively predictable and follow an order similar to this:

- Tow/salvage personnel clear the streets (As of this writing, it has still not been established as to where vehicles will be taken, due to the large numbers. Many flooded vehicles may be left in place for an extended period of time, and one estimate is that removal of debris – including vehicles – from the city could take up to two years.)
- Residents begin to notify insurers of claims.
 - *It is not known how many vehicles are uninsured or will be abandoned without settlements.*
 - *In anticipation of the need for large areas set aside for vehicle storage, the government and insurers will begin to work together to determine storage and disposal for unclaimed vehicles.*
- Insurers have begun validate claims and assess vehicles as they become available, and settle claims as appropriate.
- Totaled vehicles will be sold to auto recyclers.
- Abandoned vehicles will be held for auction within time frames set by law.*

Level of Risk: The floodwaters carried and deposited various kinds of toxic pollutants and biohazards; however, there should be no high level of risk for automotive workers *IF they take adequate protection* and are trained and aware regarding the risks associated with handling and coming in contact with these specific vehicles. Although diseases (blood borne pathogens) can be carried in the water and people have been in the water without personal protective equipment, there have been no massive outbreaks of disease reported to date.

*** The following is from the Louisiana Dept. of Public Safety, Office of Motor Vehicles:**

Section: IV Motor Vehicle Registration Requirements **Effective:** 01/01/1996
Number: 76.00 **Revised:** 05/07/2002

WATER DAMAGED VEHICLE

AUTHORITY

R.S. 771(18)
R.S. 32:774.2 R.S. 32:1261

DEFINITION

Law defines a "water-damaged vehicle" as any motor vehicle whose power train, computer, or electrical system has been damaged by flooding.

No Louisiana used motor vehicle dealer, nor any person or entity selling a vehicle in Louisiana, shall sell, transfer, or convey any used motor vehicle to any person without notifying the buyer or receiver of the vehicle in writing of the extent of any water damage from flooding which occurred to the vehicle prior to the transaction. A "disclosure of water damage" statement signed by both the transferor and transferee must be submitted as a part of the supporting documents surrendered for issuance of title. See attached suggested form.

No out-of-state used motor vehicle dealer, nor any out-of-state resident person or entity, selling a water damaged vehicle to a Louisiana resident, will be required to provide a "water damage disclosure" form, provided supporting documents clearly indicate "water damaged" to a prospective buyer.

REQUIREMENTS

Vehicles which have been damaged by water and indicated as such on the supporting documents must be shown on the Louisiana title as being "WATER DAMAGED". Out-of-state titles reflecting water damage must also be shown on any subsequent title issued.

If disclosure of water damage is not made at the time the vehicle is transferred, the buyer or receiver of the vehicle may file suit to rescind the transaction within one year of the date of the transaction. See Section IV, Policy/Procedure Statement # 97.0, Section IV - Cancelled/Rescinded Sale.

COMPUTER INFORMATION

The water damaged code must be entered on the computer as "WA", which will brand the title "WATER DAMAGED". Once the flag is entered on a vehicle record, it will become a permanent part of that vehicle's history.

RELATED POLICIES

Section IV MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Policy 42.0 Certificate of Salvage Law

Policy 42.1 Re-built Salvaged/Dismantled Vehicles

Policy 42.2 Out of State Titles Branded "Reconstructed", "Rebuilt", "Reconditioned"

Policy 42.3 Insurance Settlements When Damage Is Less than 75% Damage

Policy 42.4 Salvage Retention (Administrative Procedure)

Policy 42.5 Hail Damaged Vehicles

Policy 43.0 Supporting Documents Indicate Vehicle May Be Total Loss

Policy 97.0 Cancelled and/or Rescinded Sales

WORKER SAFETY

Companies are required by law to inform workers of potential risks (Public Law 91-596, The OSHA Act of 1970). For those who will recover, transport, inspect or work on flooded vehicles from New Orleans (or any flood zone), the following should be considered:

- Avoid skin contact with ANY toxic water or fluids that may be left in the vehicle.
 - Use gloves appropriate for touching anything that has come in contact with waste matter. Nitrile membrane type gloves are especially effective and may be used under work gloves. Dispose of nitrile gloves after each use. Do not reuse.
 - If working in the flooded area, boots and hip waders will protect feet and legs but should be washed with soap and water and a mixture of bleach and water after each use. Upon completion of work, these should be discarded due to the high incidence of E-coli.
- If flood water, residue or sludge comes in contact with the skin, wash area immediately with hot water and soap and, in the case of cuts, use a disinfectant.
- When in proximity of or contact with flood water, residue or sludge avoid wiping hands to mouth, nose or eyes. These areas are primary receptors for blood borne pathogens. Appropriate eye protection is recommended, as is ongoing appropriate sterilization of eye protection if contact with contaminant is repeated.
- Blood borne pathogens can be ingested by coming in contact with of any type of container, including plastic bottles and aluminum cans, drinking cups or any item that can be brought to the mouth.
- Atomization and inhalation: Past practices have been to use high-pressure air to blow water from recesses and hard-to-get-to spots in attempts to dry out flood vehicles. If the vehicle is suspected to have come from New Orleans, workers should wear full protective clothing and eye protection, and they should be fully informed as to how to wash off afterwards and how to clean and dispose of the clothing (if not reusable). Use a NIOSH-approved respirator when working with vehicles or parts that may contain water, sludge or residue. Clean and decontaminate respirator filters per manufacturers' recommendations.
- Exposure to blood borne pathogens from water, residue or sludge can result in transmission of:
 - E coli http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/escherichiacoli_g.htm
 - Hepatitis <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/diseases/hepatitis/>

- Fungal Infections
<http://search.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/query?DISAMBIGUATION=true&FUNCTION=search&SERVER2=server2&SERVER1=server1&PARAMETER=Fungal+Infections>
- Tetanus <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/pink/tetanus.pdf>
- Diarrhea <http://digestive.niddk.nih.gov/ddiseases/pubs/diarrhea/>
- The most likely places in a flood vehicle for water to stand and blood borne pathogens to exist are:
 - All interior pieces including trim, carpets, jute pads and anything that can harbor bacteria or blood borne pathogens. There are no known, readily available processes that can return interior “soft” parts back to a clean, hygienic and sanitary condition.
 - Water residue and/or leftover sludge, which may remain for long periods of time in enclosed places such as doors, frame rails, rocker panels, gas tanks and quarter panel/trunk floor low areas.

Workers exposed to flooded vehicles should watch for symptoms of illness (nausea, diarrhea, etc.) and seek medical care as needed.

HANDLING OF VEHICLES

CCAR has received numerous inquiries about the proper handling and disposal of vehicles. In turn, the organization has contacted the CDC, EPA and others. **As of this writing, there is no recommended method or procedure to restore submerged vehicles from New Orleans to pre-accident condition.**

CCAR continues to consult with these interested parties to determine best practices in light of the situation, but – understandably – vehicles were not the major concern immediately after the disaster.

As more information becomes available, it will be added to updated versions of this document and posted at www.ccar-greenlink.org.

Think Safety First: Because insurers are expected to make settlement decisions on such a large number of vehicles, many of these vehicles may be shipped to other parts of the United States. Mechanics, collision repairers and detail shops should be on the alert for vehicles coming from New Orleans and use appropriate safety measures. In most states, the law requires that the vehicle be noted in some manner as a “flood vehicle.”

Because some cars involved in the flood are registered to out-of-state visitors to New Orleans, it is possible that flood vehicles without Louisiana titles may be moved and be sold without declaration as to where the vehicle was flooded. Because of the possibility of blood borne

pathogens, all workers should use maximum personal protection with any flooded vehicle and be well trained.

Vehicles coming from flooded areas other than New Orleans should be handled in keeping with the current best practices of the industry for flood damaged vehicles. The challenge will be to identify which vehicles are from New Orleans, in order to address the high degree of risk from the toxic sludge.

Vehicle Components: Bridgestone Firestone has issued the following recommendations regarding all types of tires including passenger, light truck, truck, off-the-road and agricultural tires:

1. “Due to the likelihood of damage to the inner structure of tires by contaminants, unmounted tires that have been exposed to flood water should be scrapped. All other unmounted tires should be inspected for debris damage by a qualified tire professional before being placed in service.
2. “Tires that are currently mounted on vehicles that have been exposed to flood water should be cleaned with a mild detergent or vegetable based cleaner. Do not use degreasers or petroleum based cleaners on tires. The cleaned tires should then be inspected for physical damage such as cuts, tears, holes, or cracks which might allow contaminants into the tires. If damage is present, the tires should be scrapped. During the inspection, if indications of chemical residue such as oil spots remain on the cleaned tires, the tires should be inspected by a qualified tire professional at an early opportunity. Otherwise, tires without physical damage may be returned to service.
3. “All scrapped passenger and light truck radial tires are to be rendered non-serviceable by drilling a 1 inch hole or by cutting an 8 inch cut completely through the sidewalls. All scrapped truck and bus radial tires are to be rendered non-serviceable by making 3 cuts in a radial direction between the body ply cords 4 inches long through the tire sidewalls that are separated by at least 6 inches. All scrapped tires are to have the complete DOT serial number removed BEFORE the tires leave the affected storage entity's control. All tires must be scrapped in compliance with the laws, including but not limited to the environmental laws in each locality.”

Click [here](#) to see a complete copy of the Bridgestone Firestone Technical Bulletin.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Automotive Recycling and Salvage Operations Information

<http://www.ccar-greenlink.org/Salvageyard/SalvageYard.htm>

This page on the CCAR-*GreenLink*[®] site is a collection of best practices and related information from federal and state agencies and industry sources.

OSHA – Flood Information

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/emergencypreparedness/guides/floods.html>

Here are frequently asked questions that will help workers understand how floods and responding to floods may affect their health and safety.

OSHA – Flood Cleanup Fact Sheet

http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/floodcleanup.pdf

What do workers need to know when entering an area that has been flooded? This OSHA fact sheet addresses the risks of floodwater and protection tips.

OSHA – Blood Borne Pathogens

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/bloodbornepathogens/index.html>

This page is maintained as a product of the Alliance between OSHA's Office of Occupational Health Nursing (OOHN), OSHA's Office of Occupational Medicine (OOM), and the American Biological Safety Association (ABSA). It provides links to information relevant to blood borne pathogens in the workplace.

OSHA – Fungi Hazards and Flood Cleanup

http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/Bulletin3.pdf

Flood conditions contribute to the growth and transmission of many kinds of fungi, some of which can cause sickness. This OSHA fact sheet is for those workers who are at increased risk of exposure to airborne fungi and their spores because they often handle moldy building materials, decaying vegetable matter, rotting waste material, and other fungus-contaminated debris.

OSHA – Hand Hygiene and Protective Gloves in Hurricane-Affected Areas

http://www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_Hurricane_Facts/hand_hygiene_and_gloves.pdf

Preventing or minimizing disease exposure when working in contaminated flood waters is possible by taking various precautions, specifically with proper hand hygiene and the use of protective gloves.

OSHA – General Respiratory Protection Guidance for Employees and Workers

http://www.osha.gov/dts/shib/respiratory_protection.pdf

The information in this OSHA bulletin will provide basic information to workers and employers who may find themselves using respiratory protection for the first time. The guidance provides information on what respirators are, how they work, and what is needed for a respirator to provide protection.

Cleaning Spills of Blood Borne Pathogens

<http://www.biosci.ohio-state.edu/~jsmith/safety/Biosafety/BioSOP/SOPBBPSpill.pdf>

This document, produced by The Ohio State University's College of Biological Sciences, reviews the materials to have on hand and procedures to follow when cleaning up a spill involving blood borne pathogens.

NIOSH – Hurricane Katrina Response: Storm and Flood Cleanup

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/flood/>

Storm and flood cleanup activities can be hazardous. Work-related hazards that could be encountered include: electrical hazards, Carbon Monoxide, musculoskeletal hazards, heat stress, motor vehicles, hazardous materials, fire, confined spaces and falls. This information from NIOSH is intended to help employers and workers prepare in advance for anticipated response activities, and to prevent work-related injuries and illnesses in the field once rescue, recovery, and clean-up begin.

NIOSH – Eye Protection for Infection Control

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/eye/eye-infectious.html>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends eye protection for a variety of potential exposure settings where workers may be at risk of acquiring infectious diseases via ocular exposure. This document provides background information and specific details on eye protection that can be used to supplement eye protection recommendations provided in current CDC infection control guidance documents. It is intended to familiarize workers with the various types of eye protection available, their characteristics, and their applicable use.

NIOSH – Suggested Respirator Cleaning and Sanitation Procedures

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/respcln.html>

NIOSH has assembled the procedures it recommends for cleaning and sanitizing respirators, whether the respirator has a single user or is being shared by multiple users.

EPA – Fact Sheet: Flood Cleanup

<http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/flood.html>

This fact sheet from the EPA's Office of Radiation and Indoor Air discusses problems caused by microbial growth, as well as other potential effects of flooding, on long-term indoor air quality and the steps you can take to lessen these effects. Although the information contained here emphasizes residential flood cleanup, it is also applicable to other types of buildings.

EPA Announcements

[EPA and Federal Partners Warn of Potential Environmental Health Hazards When Returning to Homes and Businesses After Hurricane Katrina](#)

Cleanup activities related to returning to homes and businesses after Hurricane Katrina can pose significant health and environmental challenges. The U.S. EPA urges these precautions when citizens are authorized by local authorities to return to their homes and businesses.

[Water and Sediment Sampling Results Released](#)

The U.S. EPA, in coordination with Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality, collected water and sediment samples from multiple locations across the New Orleans metropolitan area between September 26-30, 2005. This statement updates the findings of these samples and the risks that have been identified.

Motorist Assurance Program

[“Do Not \(Try to\) Start Any Vehicle That Has Been Flooded”](#)

Among the worst things that can be done to a flood-damaged vehicle is simply turning the key to try to start it. This document from the Motorist Assurance Program details some of the damages that can result.

National Automobile Dealers Association

[“NADA Outlines Ways to Avoid Purchasing Flood-Damaged Vehicles”](#)

In a speech to the Automotive Press Association today, Jack Kain, chairman of the National Automobile Dealer Association, said vehicle history and title information should be readily available to the public and automobile dealers. Toward that goal, he proposed the following steps be taken:

- Insurance companies should make Vehicle Identification Number (VIN)-based information on totaled vehicles accessible to the public;
- Automobile manufacturers need to disclose the VINs of the cars and trucks totaled by Katrina and Rita, as well as future storms or other causes;
- State Department of Motor Vehicle (DMV) offices should work with private data vendors to create an electronic vehicle title data system that is uniform and easy accessible.

National Insurance Crime Bureau

[“NICB Launches Effort to Prevent Fraudulent Sale of Vehicles Damaged by Hurricane Katrina’s Floodwaters and Winds”](#)

NICB has dispatched special catastrophe teams to assist law enforcement and insurance companies in identifying and cataloging vehicles damaged by Hurricane Katrina to prevent their fraudulent resale to unsuspecting consumers in the future. The effort is expected to last from six months to a year.

Bridgestone Firestone Technical Bulletin

[“Hurricane Katrina: Floodwater Damage to Tires”](#)

Bridgestone Firestone North American Tire, LLC recommends the following with respect to tires that have been exposed to flood waters as a result of Hurricane Katrina. Flood water contains contaminants such as oil, grease, salt and other materials which can be damaging to tires. This recommendation applies to all types of tires including passenger, light truck, truck, off-the-road and agricultural tires.

NEW ORLEANS FLOOD VEHICLE SURVEY

1. In your opinion, should the New Orleans flood vehicle salvage be treated any differently than any other flood disaster salvage?
Yes ___ No ___ Why? _____
2. Do you believe or know of any special process that the vehicle parts structures can be better stripped, handled to be recycled back into industry for use?
Yes ___ No ___ Why? _____
3. Should N.O. vehicle salvage be kept separate from the rest of the flood salvage vehicles?
Yes ___ No ___ Why? _____
4. Should there be a special law/process/identification to prevent re-entry into the re-builder markets across the U.S.
Yes ___ No ___ Why? _____
5. Is prolonged exposure to e-coli, HIV, Hepatitis A, B & C, which has been identified in the N.O. floodwaters, of sufficient concern to consider different approaches to “total loss”?
Yes ___ No ___ Why? _____
6. Should special requirements be established on the sanitizing and cleaning of these vehicles if declared as reparable?
Yes ___ No ___ What should the requirements be? _____
7. Are “hard parts” different? Can power trains, transmissions, axles, suspension be removed, and handled in such a manner as to reenter the salvage market?
Yes ___ No ___ What processes are important to consider? _____
8. Do you think that many of these “hard parts” will ultimately fail due to length of time that the engine or transmission was under water causing interior and exterior corrosion, rusting and swelling of friction materials such as clutch discs?
Yes ___ No ___ Why? _____
9. Does the transportation of New Orleans vehicles have any special issues?
10. What additional questions should CCAR be seeking answers to?

**Please return your response (include additional pages, if needed)
along with your contact information by fax to 913-681-3033.**