



State of Louisiana

Department of Environmental Quality



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DEQ to use helicopter in leak-finding test week of June 20

BATON ROUGE –During the week of June 20, the Department of Environmental Quality, along with the Environmental Protection Agency, will be using a helicopter to test new technology that detects chemical leaks from a variety of sources.

The helicopter will be fitted with a specialized infrared gas imaging camera, known as HAWK, and will fly at low speeds and low levels around the Baton Rouge area. The public should not be alarmed if they see a low flying helicopter. The helicopter is white and green with PATROL written in black letters across the bottom.

The specialized HAWK camera can detect chemical releases from tanks, pipelines, barges, rail cars and other operations that are undetectable to the human eye. Many of the chemicals that the camera can find are of particular interest to DEQ because of the Baton Rouge area ozone problem. Some of the chemicals of concern are 1,3-butadiene, propylene and benzene.

“We are excited about the HAWK camera because we can use this as another tool in our on-going efforts to identify sources that lead to ozone formation,” DEQ Secretary Mike McDaniel said. “This technology could be used throughout the state to determine if there are chemical leaks at industrial facilities, on waterways, railways and pipelines. It will also be helpful in emergency-response situations.”

During the week of testing, DEQ staff will be available on land and in boats on the river to conduct follow-up investigations if releases are detected by the HAWK. The staff will be accompanied by a Leak Surveys, Inc., employee. Leak Surveys is the company that developed the camera and the company will also be supplying a hand-held camera to participate in the test.