

## **Emerging Contaminants in the Environment**

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Research is documenting with increasing frequency that many “emerging contaminants” (ECs) such as pharmaceuticals, hormones, and fragrances that have not historically been considered as environmental contaminants are present across the world. These emerging contaminants (ECs) are commonly detected in municipal, agricultural, and industrial wastewater sources. Since 1998, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Emerging Contaminants Project (<http://toxics.usgs.gov/regional/emc/index.html>) has been conducting “source to receptor” research on this rapidly advancing topic. The primary objectives of this project are to: 1) develop the analytical tools required for detecting ECs in the environment, 2) document the environmental occurrence and concentration of ECs, 3) characterize contaminant sources and their potential pathways into the environment, 4) determine processes and factors that affect the transport and fate of ECs, and 5) assess the potential deleterious effects of ECs and complex mixtures of ECs on aquatic and terrestrial organisms. To carry out these research objectives, an interdisciplinary team of scientists has been assembled. The overall mission of this USGS research is to provide reliable scientific data and information on ECs needed by regulators, resource managers, industry, and the public to make sound decisions about the use, disposal, and general management of these chemicals.