

**Committee on the Medical Effects of Air Pollutants (COMEAP)**

1. COMEAP continues its work on the following major reports:

- **Quantification of the Effects of Air Pollution on Health**

A COMEAP sub-group has been updating the 1998 quantification report and the 2001 report on long-term effects of particles since June 2005. Work has focussed on the effects on mortality of long-term exposure to air pollution. An interim statement on the quantification of the effects of air pollution on health in the UK has been available on its website since January 2006

([www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/comeap/pdfs/interimlongtermeffects2006.pdf](http://www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/comeap/pdfs/interimlongtermeffects2006.pdf)). The draft report of the Committee's work on mortality will be published for comments on the DH website in December 2006.

**2. Buncefield fire (11<sup>th</sup> December 2005)**

The Committee discussed the impact of the Buncefield oil depot fire at a previous meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2006. A presentation was given by Professor Virginia Murray from the Health Protection Agency. The Committee was provided with a detailed report from netcen on the air pollution levels at the time of the fire ([www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/buncefield/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/airquality/buncefield/index.htm)).

The plume had remained above the boundary layer and monitored air pollution levels in general did not rise above normal levels. The Committee therefore thought it unlikely that there would have been any significant increase in health effects due to air pollution from the fire. A statement on the Committee's views has since been placed on the DH website, in early August 2006.

**3. The Annual Air Pollution Research Meeting** will be held at the Institute for Environment and Health at Cranfield, Bedfordshire, 1-2 May 2007.

**4. Indoor Air issues:**

- 'Swimming pools and asthma' is being discussed at the next COMEAP meeting on 23 February, 2007. (Further COMEAP meetings have been set for 22 June 2007 and 12 October 2007)
- The Health & Safety Executive have set up cross-government Ministerial and official groups concerning carbon monoxide poisoning, following Lord Hunt's statement in the House of Lords, 10<sup>th</sup> October 2006, concerning the HSE's gas safety review.