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Advanced oxidation of a commercially important nonionic surfactant: Investigation of degradation products and toxicity

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ABSTRACT

The evolution of degradation products and changes in acute toxicity during advanced oxidation of the nonionic surfactant nonylphenol decaethoxylate (NP-10) with the H_2O_2/UV -C and photo-Fenton processes were investigated. H_2O_2/UV -C and photo-Fenton processes ensured complete removal of NP-10, which was accompanied by the generation of polyethylene glycols with 3-8 ethoxy units. Formation of aldehydes and low carbon carboxylic acids was evidenced. According to the acute toxicity tests carried out with *Vibrio fischeri*, degradation products being more inhibitory than the original NP-10 solution were formed after the H_2O_2/UV -C process, whereas the photo-Fenton process appeared to be toxicologically safer since acute toxicity did not increase relative to the original NP-10 solution after treatment. Temporal evolution of the acute toxicity was strongly correlated with the identified carboxylic acids being formed during the application of H_2O_2/UV -C and photo-Fenton processes.

Keywords: Acute toxicity; Degradation product; H₂O₂/UV-C process; Nonylphenol decaethoxylate (NP-10); Photo-Fenton process

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