



UPCOMING WORK FACT SHEET HIGHWAY 3 PCE SUPERFUND SITE LE MARS, IOWA - EPA REGION 7

APRIL 2021

About the Site

EPA discovered the Highway 3 PCE Superfund Site (site) in April 2008, when tetrachloroethylene (PCE) was detected in groundwater samples collected in the downtown area of Le Mars, Iowa, as part of an investigation of the nearby Le Mars Coal Gasification Plant Site. PCE and its degradation products detected in the groundwater samples were determined not to be associated with the Le Mars Coal Gasification Plant Site. As a result, EPA created the Highway 3 PCE Site, encompassing the downtown area of Le Mars, and began follow-up sampling to investigate the presence and source of PCE.

Since discovery of the site, EPA has conducted sampling activities to better understand the extent of the contamination and the potential risks to human health and the environment posed by it, and to develop and implement a cleanup plan to address identified risks. PCE was detected at levels above health concern in indoor air at buildings within the site area. As a result, the EPA Superfund Program initiated a time-critical removal action on Aug. 21, 2013, to install vapor intrusion mitigation systems in 20 buildings in downtown Le Mars. The current planned removal action will address PCE-contaminated soil.

For more site information, visit: https://response.epa.gov/site/site_profile.aspx?site_id=8980.

What Is Superfund?

Superfund often refers to hazardous waste sites and EPA's cleanup process. It is the common name for the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). This federal law authorizes EPA to clean up contaminated sites.

What Is PCE?

Tetrachloroethylene, or PCE, is considered a contaminant of concern (COC) at the site.

COCs are chemicals that need to be addressed by a cleanup action because they are a potential threat to human health or the environment. PCE is a volatile organic compound, or VOC. This kind of organic chemical compound evaporates under normal indoor temperatures and pressure. PCE was once widely used in dry cleaning and metal degreasing.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has a series of summaries about contaminants called ToxFAQs. You can find ToxFAQs on PCE at www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts18.pdf. For more information on contaminants at Superfund sites, please visit: www.epa.gov/superfund/contaminants-superfund-sites.



Upcoming Work in Your Neighborhood

PCE contamination has been detected in the soil at the 18 Plymouth Street SE property at concentrations up to 150,000 micrograms per kilogram (µg/kg). For reference, EPA established a cleanup goal of 46 µg/kg for the site, which is protective of human health risks for the vapor intrusion pathway, as well as direct contact and leaching to groundwater. In April 2021, EPA will excavate PCE-contaminated soil beneath and adjacent to the building at 18 Plymouth Street SE up to a depth of approximately 16 feet below grade and disposed of properly. EPA will treat areas of PCE-contaminated soil that cannot be excavated, due to structural integrity concerns posed by adjacent buildings, in-situ (in place) with a chemical reduction material.



Information Repositories

EPA keeps site project information and reference materials for the public to read at information repositories. EPA assessed the ability of the public to access its online repository and determined that the local community has this ability. Copies of cleanup documents for this site are available on the Site Profile Page at: <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=0706042>.

Community Technical Assistance Resources

EPA provides additional assistance to communities through a variety of technical assistance resources. These resources include the Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) program, Technical Assistance Services for Communities (TASC) program, and Community Advisory Group (CAG) formation support. For more information on these resources, please visit: www.epa.gov/superfund/superfund-technical-assistance-communities.

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