EPA Tests Residences Near Magna Metals Site to Make Sure Families Are Protected

Cortlandt Manor, Westchester County, New York

Community Update **March 2018**

WHAT IS TCE?

Trichloroethylene (TCE) is a nonflammable, colorless liquid with a somewhat sweet odor. It's mainly used to remove grease from metal parts. But it's also a part of adhesives, paint removers, and spot removers.

TCE doesn't occur naturally in the environment. It is found in soil and underground water sources when it is manufactured, used, and disposed of improperly. When TCE evaporates from contaminated soil or groundwater, its vapors sometimes move up through the soil and can get into air inside buildings.

If you have general questions or would like additional information regarding the site, please contact one of the following:

Joel Petty
On-Scene Coordinator
732-321-4388
Petty.Joel@epa.gov

Shereen Kandil
Community Involvement Coordinator
212-637-4333
kandil.shereen@epa.gov

If you would like information on other environmental concerns or the federal Superfund hazardous waste program, please contact:

George Zachos
U.S. EPA
Regional Public Liaison
(732) 321-6621
Toll Free: (888) 283-7626
zachos.george@epa.gov

BACKGROUND

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be conducting tests at residences in Cortlandt Manor, New York to determine if potentially harmful vapors are getting into homes from the Magna Metals site, a nearby former industrial facility.

Magna Metals was a metal plating, polishing and lacquering facility that operated at 510 Furnace Dock Road in Cortlandt Manor, New York from 1955 to 1979. During facility operations, wastes and solvents including iron, lead, copper, nickel, zinc chlorides, cyanides, sulfates, and trichloroethylene (TCE) were discharged to a series of leaching pits and to a septic system. The Magna Metals facility was recently demolished, but the leach pits and septic system remain buried towards the edge of the property, which includes an active commercial facility.

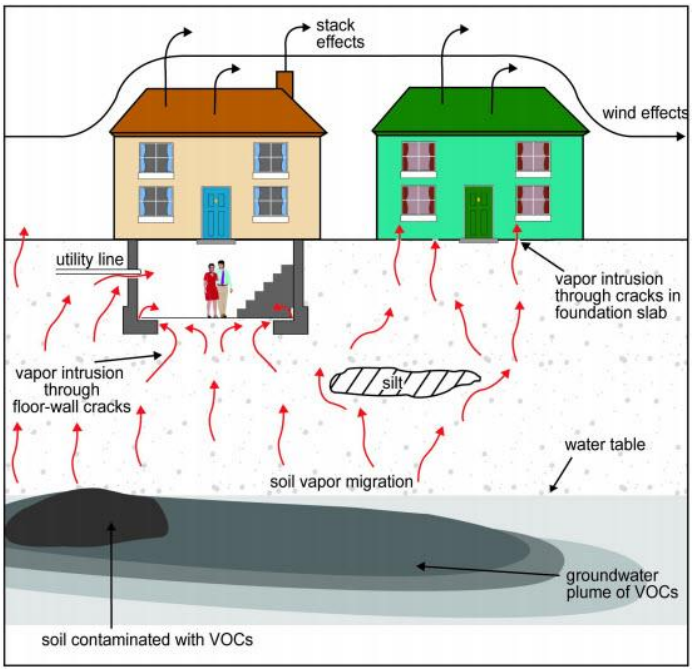
Wetlands, a stream known as Furnace Brook, an unnamed tributary, and an unnamed pond are located near the site. Investigations of the area found primarily metals, as listed above, to be present within the wetland, pond, groundwater and waterways up to one mile downstream of the facility. TCE, which is a chemical in the class known as volatile organic compounds (VOCs), was detected in groundwater on the same commercial property as the historic Magna Metals facility. TCE was not detected in groundwater beyond the Magna Metals property. TCE is considered a potential human carcinogen by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Although TCE was not present in groundwater wells along Cross Road and Rosalind Court in the residential neighborhood nearby the site, the sampling will be used to confirm that groundwater contamination is not present beneath any of the homes.

CURRENT INVESTIGATION

In February 2018, the EPA reviewed reports and data for the site and decided that additional sampling is necessary to determine if TCE vapors could be impacting residential properties. Through a process known as vapor intrusion, vapors from VOC contamination in soil or groundwater enter nearby buildings through cracks and holes in the foundations or slabs or via crawl spaces, resulting in elevated VOC concentrations in the indoor air. While the levels of contaminants may not be significant enough to pose an immediate health risk, if vapor intrusion is occurring it may pose a long-term exposure risk to residents.

WHERE WILL EPA SAMPLE, AND HOW WILL I GET THE RESULTS?

The EPA's vapor intrusion investigation will occur at targeted residential properties located near the site. Sub-slab soil gas sampling will be conducted to determine if TCE is present beneath the home. This sampling involves drilling a small hole into the floor/slab of the basement or crawl space. The following day, a soil gas sample will be collected over a 24-hour period using a vacuum canister. If the water table is too high to obtain a sub-slab sample, then water samples will be collected (if sumps are present). All samples will be analyzed for VOCs, including TCE, and the EPA will provide the property owners with their results once they are received from the lab and processed. This process usually takes about three months. The sampling is tentatively scheduled for April 2018.



VOCs = Volatile Organic Compounds.

NEXT STEPS

If elevated VOC concentrations are found beneath your home, EPA will collect indoor air samples to determine whether vapor intrusion is occurring. If vapor intrusion is occurring at levels above health-based standards, EPA will address it by installing a soil vapor extraction (SVE) system, also known as a sub-slab depressurization system. These systems consist of PVC piping installed through the slab floor and a fan connected to the piping. When the system is on, the fan applies a vacuum beneath the slab, and the vapors in the soil beneath the building are directed outside. These types of systems are commonly used throughout the country to prevent naturally occurring radon gas from entering buildings.

The EPA will provide updates on the investigative process through additional fact sheets as necessary, and will be available to explain the sampling results and next steps. Please feel free to call the contacts listed for more information.

For additional information on vapor intrusion: **https://www.epa.gov/vaporintrusion**
For information about EPA: **www.EPA.gov/region2/**