

ATSDR Releases Public Health Assessment for the North Shore Drive Superfund Site

April 2017

Past exposures to trichloroethylene (TCE) in groundwater near the North Shore Drive Superfund Site may have harmed people's health. The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) installed filtration systems in impacted homes and monitors them yearly. Therefore, people are no longer likely to be exposed to TCE at harmful levels.



ATSDR has released the public comment draft of the public health assessment for the North Shore Superfund Site in unincorporated Elkhart County, Indiana. The public health assessment explains ATSDR's findings about the contaminated groundwater plume in the area near North Shore Drive and offers ATSDR's recommendations to protect health.

North Shore Drive Superfund Site

- The North Shore Drive site is an area of groundwater contamination located in unincorporated Elkhart County, Indiana.
- Site boundaries are the St. Joseph River to the south, Old U.S. 20 to the north, Sheridan Boulevard to the east, and Corwin Drive to the west.
- In 1996, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) discovered that some private wells within the site boundaries are contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs). VOCs are chemicals that can easily evaporate into the air and may dissolve in and be transported by water.

Site Contaminants

- Trichloroethylene (TCE) is the VOC that is the main contaminant of concern in private wells at this site.
- IDEM detected TCE in some private residential wells at levels above the federal drinking water standard, or MCL (maximum contaminant level) of 5 parts per billion.
- TCE levels above the drinking water standard were as high as 85 parts per billion.
- IDEM detected other VOCs at levels below their drinking water standards.

Actions Taken at the Site

- IDEM installed and maintains point of entry (POE) carbon filtration systems in homes with residential wells that exceed the drinking water standard for TCE.
- EPA is trying to determine the source of the groundwater contamination.

ATSDR Involvement

- The Superfund law requires ATSDR to conduct public health activities for sites listed on or proposed for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) National Priorities List (NPL). Congress created the NPL, also known as Superfund, to identify and clean up hazardous waste sites.
- EPA added the North Shore Drive Site to the NPL in September 2014.
- ATSDR conducted this public health assessment to determine whether the residents living near the North Shore Drive Superfund Site are at risk for harmful health effects.

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ATSDR's Health Findings

ATSDR evaluated available environmental data to determine whether children and adults exposed to TCE in private wells might experience harmful health effects. Based on this evaluation, ATSDR concluded that

- Children who used TCE-contaminated well water for household purposes (e.g., drinking, showering, bathing, etc.) in the past may be at risk for harmful immunological effects now and in the future.
- Babies may have been at increased risk for a heart birth defect if their mothers were exposed to TCE during the first trimester of pregnancy.
- Children and adults who were exposed to the highest measured TCE concentration (85 parts per billion) in the past may be at an increased risk for cancer.

ATSDR's Recommendations to IDEM or Appropriate Agencies

- Continue monitoring the private wells in the area to ensure filtration systems are working properly;
- Continue monitoring the groundwater contaminant plume to assess whether it is currently affecting additional private wells or may affect other wells in the future;
- Consider a long-term solution (like connection to the public water supply) for residents in the potential path of the plume who use private well water for household purposes;
- Describe the kind and amount of contamination at the site, including soil contamination, if any;
- Investigate the nature and extent of site contamination below the soil surface to determine whether VOCs in soil or groundwater are getting into buildings (vapor intrusion);
- Determine the source(s) of groundwater contamination in the area; and
- Take proper action, as needed, to reduce people's exposure to TCE.

If you or someone in your family is concerned about past exposures, you should discuss your concerns with your physician.

Next Steps

- ATSDR will continue to work with federal, state, and local agencies to implement the recommendations for this site.
- ATSDR will continue to communicate with community members to gather and address community health concerns, as needed.

North Shore Drive Draft Public Health Assessment

You can find ATSDR's public health assessment on our website at www.atsdr.cdc.gov or at the

- Elkhart Public Library – Central Library
300 2nd Street
Elkhart, IN 46516

ATSDR invites you to review the draft of the public health assessment and send your comments to

- Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
Attn: Records Center
1600 Clifton Road, N.E., MS F-09
Atlanta, Georgia 30333



Learn More

Contact the following staff for more information about this site:

- **Teresa Foster, ATSDR**
Atlanta, GA (770) 488-0752 or toll free at 1-800-CDC-INFO
- **Motria Caudill, ATSDR Region 5**
Chicago, IL (312) 886-0267
- **Carrie Brunson, Elkhart County Health Department**
Elkhart, IN (574) 971-4600
- **Annie Hause, Indiana Department of Environmental Management**
Indianapolis, IN (317) 234-0354
- **Karen Kirchner, EPA Region 5**
Chicago, IL (312) 353-4669