SUMMARY OF ATSDR'S HEALTH CONSULTATION | SEPTEMBER 2026

# Southern Avenue Industrial Area (SAIA) Superfund Site | South Gate, California

## Overview

The SAIA Superfund site is located in a mixed industrial, commercial, and residential area in South Gate, California. The site is currently vacant but was a manufacturing area for decades. In 2015 and 2016, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found volatile organic compounds (VOCs) at the site.

The federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) looked at EPA's data to determine if people living or working near the site were exposed to VOCs and if they could get sick from it.




*SAIA Superfund Site location, 5211 Southern Avenue, South Gate, CA*

## What are VOCs?

**VOCs** are a group of hazardous chemicals that are commonly used in paint thinners, degreasers, and dry-cleaning fluids. These chemicals evaporate easily and become vapor or gases in air. They were found in soil, **soil gas** (air pockets between soil particles), and groundwater at the site. VOCs can also move with **groundwater** (water that collects naturally underground in spaces between soil, sand, and rock layers). The VOCs detected at SAIA include tetrachloroethylene, trichloroethylene, 1,2-dichloroethylene, and vinyl chloride.

## What is vapor intrusion?

**Vapor intrusion** happens when VOCs evaporate from groundwater and move up to the surface through soil gas (air pockets between soil particles). The VOCs can then get into buildings and pollute the indoor air.

## What did ATSDR find?

- The VOCs at SAIA have moved through the soil to the groundwater beneath the site, which flows south toward nearby commercial and residential areas. Several VOCs were found in the soil gas under businesses and homes south of the site, so there is a risk of vapor intrusion.
- Indoor air samples are available for only eight area homes in 2015 and 2016, and the levels were not a health concern. ATSDR cannot determine if vapor intrusion is occurring in other homes and businesses immediately south of the site.
- Two chemicals—benzene and 1,2-dichloroethane—were found at higher levels in these eight homes, but not high enough to make people sick. These two chemicals are probably not from the SAIA site.
- Although the groundwater at SAIA is contaminated with VOCs, the area's drinking water was not affected. The water in municipal wells is tested regularly to ensure it meets drinking water standards and is not contaminated because it comes from much deeper in the ground.
- The site is mostly covered with pavement, so people wouldn't come into contact with contaminated soil at the site.

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## What does ATSDR recommend?

### Residents

- **If you are concerned about indoor air quality, try to improve the air inside your home.**
  - Check EPA's AirNow.gov to find out when outdoor air quality is good. When it is, you can open windows and use fans. You can also run air conditioning to improve circulation.
  - Try not to use products that release harmful chemicals into the air, like commercial-grade cleansers and degreasers. Follow label instructions carefully.
  - Avoid other common sources of indoor air pollution, like tobacco smoke and hobby supplies.
  - Consider using an air cleaner that helps filter out dust, smoke, and other pollutants. Check out EPA's Guide to Air Cleaners in the Home.



### Government Organizations

- ATSDR recommends EPA continue offering indoor air sampling for nearby homes and businesses.
- ATSDR recommends EPA also oversee future redevelopment of the SAIA property to prevent exposure to chemicals in soil and groundwater.
- ATSDR recommends the South Gate Water Division continue monitoring and treating municipal water supplies.

## More Resources

- A Citizen's Guide to Vapor Intrusion Mitigation
- Investigating Vapor Intrusion
- EPA SAIA

## For More Questions

- Visit the ATSDR Regional Office Directory and contact ATSDR Region 9
- Call 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636)

## About ATSDR

ATSDR is a federal public health agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ATSDR works with other agencies and with tribal, state, and local governments to evaluate health risks in communities where people could come into contact with hazardous chemicals.

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