

Sayre HSCA Investigation

DEP's Bureau of Environmental Cleanup and Brownfields in the Northcentral Regional Office has prepared this information sheet to provide additional details to the public on the investigation into a groundwater contamination plume located in Sayre, PA, currently being conducted in accordance with the Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act (HSCA).

What is DEP Investigating?

DEP is investigating a groundwater plume(s) located in Sayre, PA. The primary goal is to determine whether there are any potential impacts to residents living within the plume, with a special emphasis on potential impacts to indoor air quality. Additional goals of DEP's investigation are to determine the possible sources of the contamination; identify any responsible party(ies); and ensure proper remediation occurs.

What are the Contaminants?

The contamination consists of chlorinated solvents, specifically trichloroethylene (TCE) and tetrachloroethylene (PCE), which are the main constituents of the plume. These solvents were commonly used in many industries, primarily from the 1930s to the 1970s.

What Are the Concerns?

DEP's investigation will primarily focus on determining whether the contaminant plume poses any risk to indoor air in homes located above the plume. The potential risk is related to the possible movement of contaminants from the groundwater plume into indoor air in homes. We do not have any current data to indicate that there is an indoor air risk to residents. DEP contractors will install monitoring points and collect samples to evaluate potential risk to homes in the target area (see figure below). The sample results will be compared to a set of state-established risk-based health standards for each contaminant.

Most residences in the study area are served by public drinking water. The public water system is not affected by the contaminant plume.

What Should I Do if I Have a Well?

DEP recommends that any well being used be tested for volatile organic compounds (VOC's) by a laboratory certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This is especially important if the well is being used for drinking water. VOC's are a category of compounds that include TCE and PCE. We would also recommend that the water from the well be run for at least 15 minutes before it is sampled, and that it be sampled at the first point it is available after entering the house.

How Was the Groundwater Plume Discovered?

DEP has been working with the Avery Dennison Corporation in their investigation, remediation and mitigation of risk posed by a known groundwater plume related to the former Paxar Corporation on Wilcox Street in Sayre. Data collected recently as part of this ongoing investigation indicate that the groundwater contamination in some areas is likely to have originated from sources other than Paxar.

What Will the Investigation Involve?

The investigation will involve installation of eight (8) soil gas monitoring points in the neighborhood between N. Wilbur Avenue and N. Lehigh Avenue and between Tuscarora Street and Seneca Street. These monitoring points are tentatively scheduled to be installed in late October 2019. If sample results indicate a potential risk to indoor air, DEP's next step would be to collect indoor air samples from homes to determine whether vapor mitigation systems are required.

A second, concurrent, investigation will be conducted in South Waverly Borough to try to better define potential sources and contaminant movement in the groundwater. This investigation will involve the installation of groundwater monitoring wells.

Who is Paying for the Investigation?

The Hazardous Sites Cleanup Act (HSCA) provides DEP with the funding and the authority to conduct investigations at sites where hazardous substances have potentially been released and a responsible party has not been determined. HSCA funding will be used for all aspects of DEP's investigation and any remediation or mitigation of the groundwater contamination not previously established to be related to the former Paxar Corporation on Wilcox Street in Sayre. HSCA allows DEP to seek recovery of the costs it expends from the parties responsible for the contamination, in cases where they can be identified.

The Avery Dennison Corporation will continue to fund investigation, remediation and mitigation activities related to the Paxar site.

Where is the Investigation Being Conducted?

The neighborhood of potential impact where soil gas monitoring points are being installed and sampled is depicted in the map below. The investigation will be focused on the area between N. Wilbur Avenue and N. Lehigh Avenue and between Tuscarora Street and Seneca Street.

How Long Will the Investigation Take?

There is no specified time frame for the investigation and any potential mitigation activities. Data will be collected from the eight soil gas monitoring points and analyzed, and any further activities will be determined based on the initial data collected and will follow the processes outlined in the HSCA program. For more information on the HSCA program, please visit the 2018 HSCA Annual Report at <http://www.depgis.state.pa.us/hascaannualreport/> and the HSCA web page at <https://www.dep.pa.gov/Business/Land/SiteRemediation/Hazardous-Sites-Cleanup-Program/Pages/default.aspx>.

How Can I Stay Updated on the Sayre Investigation?

Updates will be posted periodically to the DEP Northcentral Region Community Information web page: <https://www.dep.pa.gov/About/Regional/North-central-Regional-Office/Community-Information/Pages/Sayre-HSCA-Investigation.aspx>. DEP will also continue to provide periodic updates directly to affected residents and the Boroughs of Sayre and South Waverly as new information becomes available.

If I Have Any Questions Who Can I Contact?

Any questions should be directed to the DEP Northcentral Region HSCA Manager at 570.327.3418 or csinclair@pa.gov or the DEP Northcentral Region Community Relations Coordinator at 570.327.3659 or meglehman@pa.gov.

Figure1: Map of area to be investigated in Sayre Borough



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