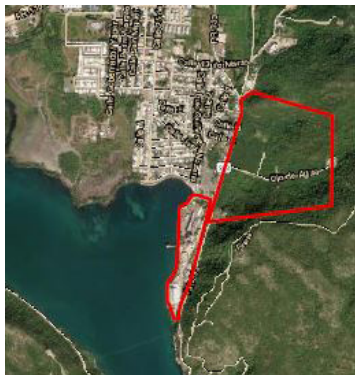


# Protect Yourself from Environmental Exposure - PCBs in Soil

## Ochoa Fertilizer Company Superfund Site, Guanica, PR

The purpose of this fact sheet is to let people know they could be at risk of exposure to soil contaminated from Polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) at the Ochoa Fertilizer Company Superfund Site. This fact sheet provides ways for the community to reduce their exposure to PCBs and protect themselves from future PCB exposures. It also provides resources to learn more about PCBs and the Ochoa Fertilizer Company Superfund site.



The Ochoa Fertilizer Company Superfund Site is the site of a former fertilizer company. PCBs are in the soil at the site. The east side of the site is undeveloped except for a power station. The west side contains a facility still making fertilizer.

Frequent stormwater runoff and flooding has caused PCB-contaminated soil to move. People living in the area may be exposed to PCBs if they come in contact with the contaminated soil.

Read more about the site on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Ochoa Fertilizer Company Superfund web page at <https://cumulis.epa.gov/supercpad/cursites/csitinfo.cfm?id=0203717>.



### What are PCBs?

PCBs are mixtures of up to 209 individual chemicals. PCBs are not found in the environment naturally. They are man-made and were used in the manufacturing of electrical equipment until banned in 1979. They are either oily liquids or solids and are colorless to light yellow in appearance with no known smell or taste. Many PCB mixtures are known in the United States by their industrial name, Aroclor. PCBs may cause health problems if exposed at high levels.

Factors that play a part in whether you will have health problems from an exposure to any chemical depends on:

- the type of chemical;
- the amount (how much of a chemical you were exposed to);
- the duration (how long the exposure was); and
- the frequency (how many times you were exposed).

**To learn more about PCBs and see frequently asked health questions (FAQs) see ATSDR's PCB ToxFAQs at <https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts17.pdf>**

**For More Information about ATSDR Activities at the Ochoa Fertilizer Company Superfund Site Contact:**

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**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services**  
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry

## How to Stay Safe from PCBs Indoors

- Take off your shoes when you get home, so you don't bring dirt in.
- Put rugs at your doorways. Wash rugs often and separately from regular laundry.
- Clean your home every week to keep it as dust-free as possible.
  - » Clean floors, windowsills, doorframes, and baseboards with soap and water.
  - » Use a wet mop on hard floors.
- Vacuum carpets and rugs before mopping floors to avoid spreading dust. If you can, use a vacuum with a high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filter. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for changing the filter.
- Wash your hands after playing or working outside, gardening, or cleaning and before eating and drinking.
- Wipe your pet's paws before they enter your home.

## How to Stay Safe from PCBs Outdoors

- Keep children and pets away from dirt.
- Frequently wash outdoor toys and items that children touch or might put in their mouths.
- Don't eat or drink while working in the yard or garden.
- If PCBs have been found in an area, don't dig, mow, drive, or play there.
- Don't work or play in the yard on windy days when it can get dusty.
- Place grass or mulch cover over bare soil.
- Try not to make too much dust when you're outside.

## How to Garden Safely

- Don't plant vegetables in contaminated soil. Use containers or raised beds with clean soil.
- Clean vegetables and fruit with cold water and a brush before cooking or eating.
- Peel root crops such as carrots, potatoes, turnips, and onions before eating.



### Where to Learn More

**ATSDR:** [www.atsdr.cdc.gov](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov)

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), based in Atlanta, Georgia, is a federal public health agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ATSDR protects communities from harmful health effects related to exposure to natural and man-made hazardous substances. We do this by responding to environmental health emergencies; investigating emerging environmental health threats; conducting research on the health impacts of hazardous waste sites; and building capabilities of and providing actionable guidance to state and local health partners.

For questions about ATSDR call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) or visit [www.cdc.gov/info](http://www.cdc.gov/info).

