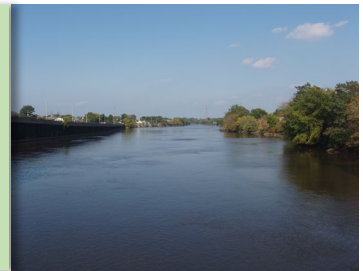




DIAMOND ALKALI SUPERFUND SITE: 80-120 LISTER AVENUE CLEANUP

ESSEX COUNTY, NEW JERSEY



JANUARY 2025

Clean Up Plan for 80 and 120 Lister Avenue

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized its cleanup plan for the 80 and 120 Lister Avenue portion of the Diamond Alkali Superfund site. This portion of the site is the location of the former manufacturing plant that handled and produced pesticides and herbicides, including Agent Orange. These activities left behind contaminated soil, debris, and groundwater. At the time that the EPA first addressed this contamination, there were no viable options for offsite disposal; and onsite treatment would have created more risk to the community, so the EPA made the decision to select an interim containment plan and provide for regular re-evaluations of new technologies as they became available.

The EPA's Plan to Involve the Community

The EPA developed a Community Involvement Plan, which includes a detailed description of how the EPA will keep the public informed and involved in the cleanup of the 80 and 120 Lister Avenue portion of the Diamond Alkali Superfund site. To read the plan, visit: semspub.epa.gov/work/02/704638.pdf

Through this process, the EPA found that there are challenges with technologies that could be used to treat the material. The agency also found that digging up and moving the material contained at the Lister Avenue properties would pose a much greater risk to people in the surrounding community than leaving it in place and making sure it does not spread. The EPA is therefore making the interim decision permanent and enhancing that original plan with improvements.

The EPA will keep the hazardous material contained with a cap and continue operating a groundwater containment system. The EPA will improve the interim cleanup that was completed in 2001, by reinstalling six groundwater extraction wells and reactivating an extraction well in the southern portion of the Lister Avenue properties. These and the other existing wells help contain the groundwater on site and prevent the groundwater from going into the Passaic River. The plan also upgrades the groundwater treatment system, reassesses the cap, and makes any needed repairs.

The EPA chose this cleanup approach because it would avoid the short-term risks and challenges associated with other options like excavating, removing, and transporting highly contaminated material and then treating that contamination on-site or at an offsite disposal facility. The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, or NJDEP, agrees with the EPA's final cleanup plan.

Site Contamination

The EPA and the NJDEP found high levels of dioxins and other contaminants like pesticides, and other hazardous substances in the soil and groundwater at 80 and 120 Lister Avenue.



Dioxins accumulate in food chains mainly in the fatty tissue of animals and take a long time to break down once they are in the environment. Dioxins are [highly toxic and can cause cancer](https://www.epa.gov/dioxin/learn-about-dioxin), reproductive and developmental problems, damage to the immune system, and can interfere with hormones. More information: <https://www.epa.gov/dioxin/learn-about-dioxin>

Assessment of Flooding Concerns

As part of this decision, the EPA assessed the existing containment system for climate resiliency and found that the Lister Avenue portion of the site can withstand anticipated flood and storm impacts. No material was spread from the Lister Avenue properties even during major storms like Superstorm Sandy in October 2012, Hurricane Henri in August 2021, and Hurricane Ida in September 2021.

The EPA has also evaluated rising temperatures, sea level rise, extreme weather and heavy precipitation and found that the current cleanup will address these vulnerabilities. The agency's final cleanup plan includes bringing a temporary groundwater treatment system to the Lister Avenue properties to provide treatment if the existing system is damaged during a storm.

Fish Advisories

The State of New Jersey issued advisories that warn against eating fish or shellfish from the Lower Passaic River and Newark Bay, and prohibit eating, selling, or taking blue crab from the tidal waters Passaic River and from Newark Bay.

Site Background

The Diamond Alkali Superfund site includes the former manufacturing facility at 80 and 120 Lister Avenue in Newark, New Jersey, the Lower Passaic River Study Area, and the Newark Bay Study Area. The Lower Passaic River Study Area includes the 17-mile tidal stretch of the river from Dundee Dam to Newark Bay and tributaries. The Newark Bay Study Area includes Newark Bay and portions of the Hackensack River, Arthur Kill and Kill van Kull. The surrounding community is densely populated, predominantly low income, heavily industrialized, and overburdened by environmental justice issues.

Kolker Chemical Works, Inc. produced chemicals at 80 Lister Avenue in the 1940s. The Diamond Alkali Company, later purchased by and merged into Occidental Chemical Corporation, or OCC, owned and operated the facility in the 1950s and 1960s. The facility manufactured agricultural chemicals including herbicides used in "Agent Orange", a defoliant chemical that removes leaves from trees and plants. These manufacturing processes produced dioxin.

The NJDEP and the EPA sampled at and near 80 Lister Avenue and in the river in 1983 and found high levels of dioxin and other contaminants. Following the sampling, the EPA listed the site on the Superfund National Priorities List in 1984.

The EPA has been assessing the interim cleanup every five years since 2001. In consultation with the NJDEP, the EPA found that the interim cleanup has consistently worked as intended and remains protective of people's health and the environment. The EPA will continue monitoring and assessing the cleanup of 80 and 120 Lister Avenue every five years.

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