

# NPL Site Narrative for Kerr-McGee (Sewage Treatment Plant)

## KERR-MCGEE (SEWAGE TREATMENT PLANT) West Chicago, Illinois

**Conditions at proposal (October 15, 1984):** The Kerr-McGee (Sewage Treatment Plant) Site covers about 23 acres in West Chicago, Illinois. About 15,000 people live within 3 miles of the site.

In 1931, Lindsay Light & Chemical Co. established a mill called the "Rare Earths Facility" in West Chicago for the extraction of thorium and nonradioactive elements from monazite and other ores. Later, the property was used for the manufacture of gaslight mantles (which contain thorium), mesothorium, and, during World War II, hydrofluoric acid. Ownership of the facility changed from Lindsay to American Potash & Chemical in 1958 and to Kerr-McGee Chemical Corp. in 1967. Operations at the property continued until 1973, when Kerr-McGee, the current owner, closed the facility.

The original sewage treatment plant was built in 1919 and included two septic tanks. Over the years, the plant changed, and the tanks were filled with radioactive materials. In addition, fill, including radioactive materials, was placed in other areas of the site. While modernizing the plant, the city has located many surface and subsurface areas of contamination. To allow the modernization to continue, any areas that obstruct construction are expected to be excavated and the material placed in a designed storage area on the site.

**Status (June 10, 1986):** Because of an administrative error during the public comment period, EPA is extending the comment period on this site for an additional 60 days.

**Status (August 30, 1990):** As modernization continued at the sewage treatment plant, Kerr-McGee excavated contaminated soils and removed them to the Rare Earths Facility for storage. The Kerr-McGee activities are voluntary, without EPA oversight or involvement.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.