

NPL Site Narrative for UGI Columbia Gas Plant

UGI COLUMBIA GAS PLANT Columbia, Pennsylvania

UGI Columbia Gas Plant is a 1.6-acre site located on Front Street in Columbia, Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. From approximately 1853 to 1935, Columbia Gas used the site for gas manufacturing. Ownership of the property was transferred to Pennsylvania Power and Light (PP&L) in 1935, and the Lancaster County Gas Company in 1949. Lancaster County Gas merged with UGI Corporation and occupied the site until 1976, when the land was privately purchased. The property is currently used as a boat dealership. The land surrounding the site is predominantly residential. The Susquehanna River is located approximately 400 feet southwest of the site.

The primary sources of contamination at the site include the gas holder, the relief holder pit, and a 4,200 square-foot area of contaminated soil. The main waste streams consist of tar and purifier wastes. Hazardous substances associated with the contaminant sources and waste streams include volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (semi-VOCs), polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), heavy metals, and cyanide. During operation of the site, overflows from an onsite tar separator were directed to an open ditch that led to the Susquehanna River. Records show that local fishermen complained to the plant that their boats were being covered with tar.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources (PADER) conducted a preliminary assessment of the UGI Columbia Gas Plant site in August 1984. In 1985, PP&L and UGI Corp. conducted a field investigation to determine the nature and extent of contamination at the site. Tar was encountered in test pits dug in the gas and relief holders and in several other test pit and boring areas onsite. Soil, sediment, sludge, tar, and ground water samples collected during this investigation revealed VOCs, semi-VOCs, heavy metals, and cyanide contamination. An area of Susquehanna River sediments directly downstream of the site was found to contain tar-related contaminants such as PAHs and cyanide.

In 1987, PP&L and UGI recovered approximately 100 cubic yards of tar-contaminated material which had been pushed into a railroad pedestrian tunnel bordering the site. They disposed of the tar sludge in a facility permitted under EPA's Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). Also during 1987, it was determined that approximately 80 cubic yards of sediment southwest and directly downstream of the site were contaminated with tar from the tar separator and open ditch. In January 1991 EPA conducted an expanded site inspection of the UGI Columbia Gas Plant. The ground water, soil, and surface water samples from the Susquehanna River confirmed previously reported contamination of VOCs, semi-VOCs, PAHs, and cyanide. Within 15 miles downstream of the site, approximately 90 people use the Susquehanna River as a source of drinking water. Approximately 1,000 people use ground water wells within 4 miles of the site for water.

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/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.