

# NPL Site Narrative for Conrail Rail Yard (Elkhart)

## CONRAIL RAIL YARD (ELKHART) Elkhart, Indiana

**Conditions at proposal (June 24, 1988):** Consolidated Rail Corp. (Conrail) has operated a rail yard on County Road 1 at the southwestern edge of Elkhart, Elkhart County, Indiana, since 1976. Previously, the 675-acre property had been a rail yard for New York Central Railroad (1956-68) and Penn Central Railroad (1968-76).

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management has documented numerous spills at the rail yard since 1976.

In June 1986, EPA's emergency removal program was asked by the Elkhart County Health Department to confirm analyses indicating that local wells were contaminated with carbon tetrachloride and trichloroethylene (TCE). EPA's investigation identified five areas covering about 5 acres requiring further study: the diesel shop, the area surrounding oil and water tanks, several areas where wastes may have been buried, the shop where car tanks were cleaned, and the Crawford Ditch, which flows into the St. Joseph River. Analyses indicate that soils in some of these areas contain carbon tetrachloride, and wells downgradient of the rail yard contain carbon tetrachloride, TCE, tetrachloroethylene, chloroform, and dichloroethane. EPA installed activated carbon units at residences with contaminated wells. EPA analyses indicate a plume of contaminated ground water that is 1.5-2 miles long and empties into the St. Joseph River. An estimated 55,000 people obtain drinking water from Elkhart municipal wells and private wells within 3 miles of the site.

**Status (August 30, 1990):** In June 1988, EPA issued a "special notice letter" offering Conrail the opportunity to conduct a remedial investigation/feasibility study (RI/FS) to determine the type and extent of contamination at the site and identify alternatives for remedial action. In September 1988, EPA notified Conrail its response could not be considered an acceptable "good faith" offer. Accordingly, EPA is conducting the RI/FS; field work began in August 1989. Initial data confirmed the existence of two plumes of contaminated ground water. EPA is reviewing the data to assess the need for additional field work and interim remedial measures.

Field investigations by a Conrail contractor found TCE and carbon tetrachloride in soil and ground water within the rail yard.

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.