



Contact EPA

For more information about the site, contact one of these team members:

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You may also call EPA's Chicago office toll-free at 800-621-8431, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. weekdays.

For more information

To learn about the EPA Superfund program, visit
<https://www.epa.gov/superfund>.

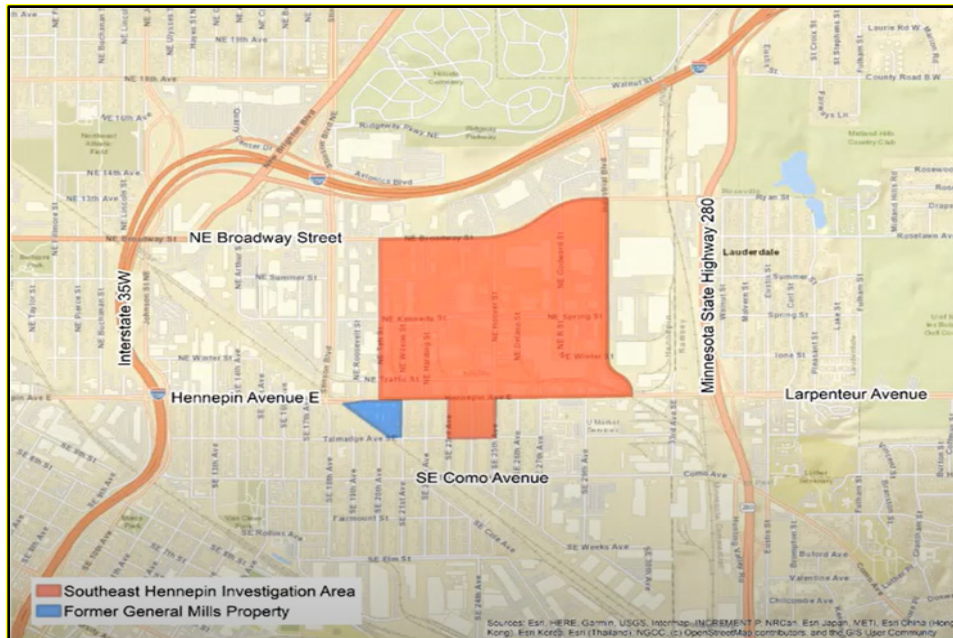
To find more details about the site, visit its EPA webpage at
<https://bit.ly/3tZlh1g>.

Documents, reports, and other information about the site can also be found at the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's office, 520 Lafayette Road N, St. Paul, Minnesota, 55155, or at
<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/waste/mnneapolis-se-hennepin-area-groundwater-and-vapor-site>.

National Priorities List Placement Paves the Way for Investigation

SE Hennepin Area Groundwater and Vapor Superfund Site
Minneapolis, Minnesota

March 2022



Perimeter of Southeast Hennepin investigation area (larger shaded area) and perimeter of neighboring General Mills Superfund site (smaller shaded area).

On March 17, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized the Southeast Hennepin Area Groundwater and Vapor site's placement on the National Priorities List, or NPL, due to vapor intrusion concerns (*see explanation of vapor intrusion on page 3*). Placement on the NPL makes the site eligible for federal money to investigate and clean up the site under EPA's Superfund program. Over the next year, EPA will conduct a search for potentially responsible parties and develop the workplan for the site investigation, which are the first steps in the Superfund process. The workplan, expected in 2023, will include the following components:

- A site management plan that describes how activities at the site during the investigation will be managed including access, security, contingency procedures, responsibilities, storage and disposal of investigation-derived waste and other procedures to be followed in the field.
- A sampling and analysis plan that defines how and what types of sampling will be done.
- A quality assurance plan that describes the quality assurance and quality control protocols and objectives, methods, and procedures to be followed during the investigation.
- A health and safety plan that defines procedures and precautions to be taken to ensure the safety of the workers and community during the investigation.
- A data management plan that describes how data will be managed throughout the investigation.

Long-term investigation

Once the workplan is approved, EPA will start its long-term investigation at the site, which is expected to begin in 2023. EPA will sample soil, groundwater (water underground), surface water, sediment (mud) and air to determine the area and amount of contamination present. The Agency will also define ways people may come into contact with the contamination. This investigation is expected to take between 12 to 18 months.

After the investigation is complete, EPA will publish a remedial investigation report detailing the findings of the investigation. A risk assessment report explaining the risks to people and the environment posed by the site will also be completed. All reports will be available at EPA's office and will also be placed on EPA's webpage (*see front page sidebar*).

Study of cleanup alternatives

Based on the findings of the investigation mentioned above, strategies to clean up or resolve any contamination concerns will be identified and presented in a feasibility study report. EPA will then develop a proposed plan to recommend the option that the Agency has determined to be the most effective strategy for cleanup. After the release of this plan, the community will have an opportunity to comment on EPA's recommended alternative, as well as all the other alternatives that were considered. Although many factors could affect the project schedule, EPA anticipates the proposed plan to be ready for comment in 2026. At that time, EPA will notify community members of the availability of the plan and provide the community with a summary.

EPA will also hold a public meeting around this time to explain the plan to the community and answer any questions people may have. During this meeting, people will be given an opportunity to ask questions and provide comment on the proposed plan, although comments will also be accepted via mail and email. EPA will review and evaluate the comments and select the final cleanup plan for the site, then notifying the community of the final cleanup selection.

EPA will then begin designing the cleanup of the site, which generally takes about 12 to 18 months. Subsequent implementation of the cleanup can take several years, even decades, depending on the cleanup plan selected. If at any time during this process EPA determines the site poses an immediate threat to people or the environment, the Agency will take immediate action to eliminate any hazards.

Background

The Southeast Hennepin Area Groundwater and Vapor site consists of an area of groundwater contaminated with various volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, including trichloroethylene, or TCE, from several known and unknown sources. These VOCs have gotten into the ground and created an area of vapor contamination in the

Information on the neighboring General Mills/Henkel Corp. Superfund Site

The neighboring General Mills/Henkel Corp. Superfund site is located on East Hennepin Avenue in Minneapolis. General Mills used the area as a food research facility beginning in 1930, and from 1947 to 1977, and also used the site for chemical research. Waste disposal operations between 1947 and 1962 contaminated soil and groundwater with hazardous chemicals. The property was purchased by the Henkel Corp. in 1977 and has since been resold.

Soil and groundwater cleanup has occurred at the site, and additional work to address the vapor intrusion pathway is nearing completion. Most of the buildings requiring protection now have vapor mitigation systems; however, there are still buildings that require mitigation. Vapor mitigation systems either actively or passively remove vapors from a building. Groundwater monitoring continues at the site; it is addressed by General Mills, Inc. with Minnesota Pollution Control Agency oversight.



Partial aerial view from East Hennepin Avenue.

Ways to get involved

A Community Advisory Group, or CAG, may be convened for this site, if requested, to provide a public forum for community members to present and discuss their needs and concerns related to the Superfund decision-making process. CAGs can assist EPA in making better decisions on how to clean up a site and offers EPA a unique opportunity to hear community preferences for site cleanup and redevelopment. Information about CAGs can be found at www.epa.gov/superfund/community-advisory-groups.

If you are interested in helping form a CAG for the Southeast Hennepin Area Groundwater and Vapor Superfund site and/or be put on the site's mailing list, please contact Kirstin Safakas, the site's Community Involvement Coordinator, at safakas.kirstin@epa.gov. You may also stay up to date via EPA's webpage (*see front page sidebar*).

soil, also known as a plume. The contaminants were first identified when a groundwater and vapor plume was found to be migrating towards the neighboring General Mills/Henkel Corp. Superfund site. The area has developed around commercial and industrial operations since the 1930s. Former and current operations that may have used VOCs include potential dumping at a former gravel pit, foundry and outdoor motor manufacturing, metal finishing, and dry-cleaning. Residential properties are located along the southern portion of the site.

Minnesota referred the site to the EPA due to the potential impacts, size, scope and complexity of the site and the need for further investigation and cleanup. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency had managed site contamination for several years under a variety of state programs, both voluntary and enforcement driven, but had been unable to effectuate a comprehensive investigation and cleanup. Several facilities in the study are still in the state's voluntary cleanup program.

Vapor Intrusion

When chemicals or petroleum products spill or leak into the ground, they may give off gases or vapors that can get inside buildings, such as homes. The vapors can move through the soil and seep through cracks in basements or foundations, sewer lines and other openings. Common products that may cause vapor intrusion are gasoline or diesel fuel, dry cleaning solvents and industrial degreasers.

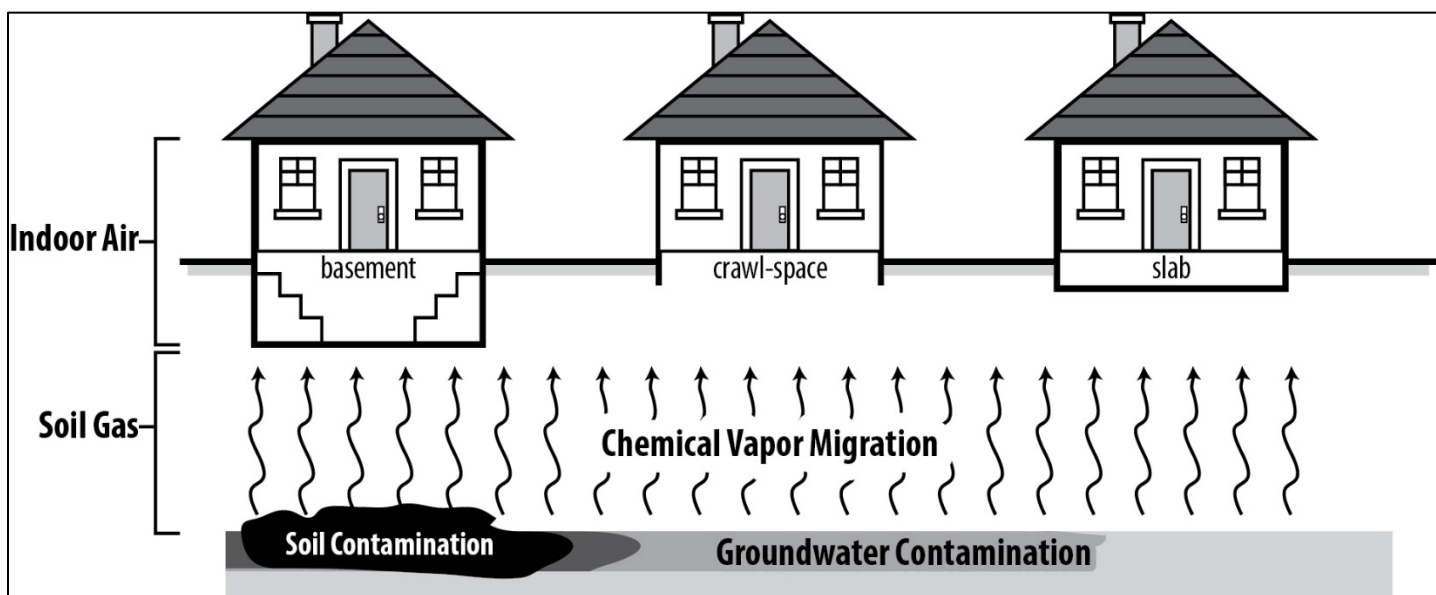
Some vapors have a gasoline odor, and others are odorless and tasteless, such as tetrachloroethylene, or PCE, and TCE. At the Southeast Hennepin Area Groundwater and Vapor Superfund site, TCE is the primary VOC found within the plume.

Vapor intrusion is a concern because vapors can build up to a point where the health of residents or workers may be at risk. Health risks vary based on the type and amount of chemicals, although how healthy you are and how long you are exposed are also factors. Until these vapors are vented from the indoor air, some people may experience symptoms that could include eye and respiratory irritation, headaches or nausea. Low-level chemical exposures over many years, however, may lead to chronic disease, including cancer. Long-term exposures are especially dangerous for children, pregnant women or people with underlying health conditions.

In future investigations of the Southeast Hennepin Area Groundwater and Vapor site, EPA may need permission to conduct air sampling on your property if it is within the site boundaries. This sampling will help to determine if vapor intrusion is occurring.

If you have specific questions on how vapor intrusion may impact your family's health, contact your local health department, or the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, or ATSDR, at 888-422-8737, or visit www.atsdr.cdc.gov.

For more detailed information on vapor intrusion, visit <https://www.epa.gov/vaporintrusion>. You may also call the EPA Indoor Air Quality Information hotline at 800-438-4318.



This diagram shows how vapors can rise through the soil and into your home.


EPA Technical Assistance Grants

EPA's cleanup decisions depend on several different things, including what studies say about site conditions, the type of contamination found, and the cleanup methods that would work at a particular site. A technical advisor can help community members participate in decision making by helping them better understand what is going on at the site. EPA's Technical Assistance Grant, or TAG, program provides money to community groups to pay for these technical advisors to interpret and explain technical reports, site conditions, and EPA's proposed cleanup proposals and decisions. Initially, EPA will award a TAG for up to \$50,000, but additional funds may be available as years progress.

EPA encourages applications from groups that are interested in becoming more involved in the decision-making process for a nearby Superfund site but need help understanding the technical issues. Your group may apply for a TAG if your members' health, economic well-being, or enjoyment of the environment is, or may be, hurt by a Superfund site. Note that your group will need to be incorporated as a state nonprofit to be eligible. Municipalities or other government agencies are not eligible to receive TAGs, however, government officials may belong to a community group requesting a TAG.

There can be only one TAG awarded at a time for a Superfund site. To get a TAG, your group must contribute a matching share of at least 20 percent to the project. Note, though, that this match usually is not difficult to provide—most groups make their match by donating volunteer hours and other “in-kind” services. TAGs cannot be used to duplicate field or laboratory work. They may only be used to understand or interpret existing documents and activities conducted at the site.

The Southeast Hennepin Groundwater and Vapor Superfund site is in the very early stages of the Superfund process, and a TAG may not yet be useful. However, the process for obtaining a TAG is complex and this early stage may be a good time to learn more about the program. For more information about the EPA TAG program, visit www.epa.gov/superfund/technical-assistance-grant-tag-program.

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