



Contact EPA

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

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For more information

To find more details about the site, visit the EPA webpage at www.epa.gov/superfund/franklinstreetgroundwater

Additional Contacts

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For questions about water quality data:

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Do you want to receive email updates about the Franklin Street Site?

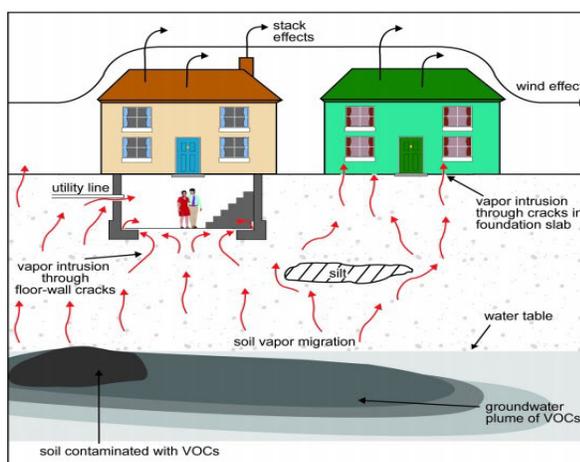
If you are interested in receiving email updates from EPA on the progress of the Franklin Groundwater Contamination Superfund site, please email Ruth Muhtsun at muhtsun.ruth@epa.gov with your contact information.

EPA Begins Sampling for Remedial Investigation

Franklin Street Groundwater Contamination Superfund Site
Spencer, Indiana
February 2024

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will begin the remedial investigation (RI) at the Franklin Street Groundwater Contamination Superfund site in early 2024. The RI is the first phase of the Superfund process that helps EPA define the nature and extent of contamination at the site. The RI will include an evaluation of the human health and ecological risks posed by site contamination. RI sampling is expected to continue throughout 2024 and into 2025. EPA will update the community on the RI schedule and any additional sampling on its website, through public meetings, and occasional mailings. EPA will also summarize the data collected throughout the RI in a report that will be made available to the public.

The Franklin Street Groundwater site consists of groundwater contaminated with volatile organic compounds, or VOCs. "Groundwater" is an environmental term for an underground source of water. Because of their chemical makeup, VOCs can evaporate into the air and may lead to an environmental problem called "vapor intrusion." The unsafe VOC gases can come from the polluted soil and contaminated groundwater below the surface. These vapors seep or intrude into homes and other buildings through structural cracks. Although VOCs can be found in common household products, exposure to elevated levels can affect your health.



EPA will begin vapor screening in public right of ways throughout Spencer. This sampling will help determine any potential impacts from contaminated groundwater to homes and businesses. If the data shows the need for additional sampling, EPA may reach out to private property owners for permission to conduct in-home testing. If the additional sampling determines that vapors are entering into the buildings at levels that may cause health concerns, EPA will provide an in-home remedy to reduce exposure.

EPA will then sample groundwater and soil in areas that may be a contributing source of the site-related contamination. EPA will use the results from this sampling to broaden the study area over the next several years until the full extent of contamination at the site is defined.

Next Steps

Once the RI is complete, EPA will evaluate cleanup options in a Feasibility Study (FS). After evaluating the different cleanup options, EPA will publish a document called a Proposed Plan. The Proposed Plan will outline the cleanup alternatives considered for the site and identify EPA's recommended cleanup method. The Proposed Plan will be made available to the public, and the community will have 30 days to comment on the plan. Once all public comments are received and addressed, EPA will select the final cleanup method in a Record of Decision (ROD). Finally, EPA will design and implement the cleanup.

Background

The Franklin Street Groundwater site consists of a groundwater plume contaminated with a VOC called tetrachloroethylene, or PCE. PCE is often used in the dry-cleaning industry and can be found in common household products. The contamination plume is located within the Bean Blossom/Patricksborg Water Corporation (BBP) Wellhead Protection Area. The well field is in a large field on the western edge of the Town of Spencer.

In 2011 and 2012, finished water (which is treated water intended to be distributed as drinking water) collected from BBP's treatment plant contained detectable PCE. From 2014 to 2016, the Indiana Department of Environmental Management took additional samples at multiple locations around the town of Spencer, including BBP's municipal wells and other private wells located north and northeast of the well field.

The State of Indiana completed a Preliminary Site Investigation in 2017 and determined the site is eligible for the National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL is the list of hazardous waste sites in the country that are eligible for federal funding under the Superfund law. EPA listed the Franklin Street site on the NPL in September 2018.

Drinking Water

BBP operates the groundwater wells and a treatment plant that supply drinking water to Spencer residents. After finished water collected from BBP's treatment plant had a detection of VOCs, BBP installed an air stripper on their facility. Air stripping is the process of moving air through contaminated water to remove VOCs. Water utility servicers like BBP are required to provide water quality data regularly to the State of Indiana as required by their permit to operate (See front page for IDEM Office of Drinking Water information). EPA's investigation and cleanup at the Franklin Street site will focus on identifying and addressing the source(s) of groundwater contamination and any resulting risks posed by this contamination.

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