

NPL Site Narrative for Jet Propulsion Laboratory (NASA)

JET PROPULSION LABORATORY (NASA) Pasadena, California

Conditions at Proposal (February 7, 1992): The Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL) covers 176 acres at 4800 Oak Grove Drive in Pasadena, Los Angeles County, California. The area is primarily residential with some light commercial operations. It is bordered on the east by the Arroyo Seco Dry Wash, on the west by a residential neighborhood, on the north by the San Gabriel Mountains, and on the south by an equestrian club and a Los Angeles County Fire Station. Approximately 120,800 people live within 4 miles of the site.

The Army developed and operated JPL between 1945 and 1957; jurisdiction was transferred to the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in 1958. The California Institute of Technology is under contract to NASA to conduct research and development at JPL in aeronautics, space technology, and space transportation. JPL's primary activities include exploration of the earth and solar system with automated spacecraft, and the design and operation of the Global Deep Space Tracking Network.

Among the sources of hazardous substances at the site are numerous seepage pits, where liquid and solid wastes were reportedly disposed of; a "settling" chamber in the JPL storm drain system; contaminated soil excavated from part of the system; and an area where waste solvents were dumped into three holes. The general types of hazardous substances at JPL, now and in the past, include waste solvents such as tetrachloroethene, solid rocket fuel propellants, cooling tower chemicals, sulfuric acid, Freon, mercury, and chemical laboratory wastes.

In 1990, contractors for JPL detected significantly elevated levels of carbon tetrachloride, trichloroethene, tetrachloroethene, and other volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in ground water both under and downgradient of the site. An estimated 68,000 people obtain drinking water from municipal wells within 4 miles of the site. Four City of Pasadena wells were shut down during 1989-90 due to VOCs attributable to JPL. The city has installed a treatment system, and the wells were returned to operation in October 1990. In addition, two Lincoln Avenue Water Co. wells were shut down in 1987 due to VOCs attributable to JPL; these wells are still closed.

Status (October 1992): EPA and JPL have started to negotiate a Federal Facilities Agreement under CERCLA Section 120 covering future activities at the site.

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.