TCE and PCE in Your Home

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10 December 2006

Are there health risks from breathing low levels of TCE and PCE over long periods?

Trichloroethylene (TCE) and perchloroethylene (PCE) belong to a family of chemicals known as *chlorinated solvents* that easily evaporate into the air. Breathing moderate amounts of TCE may cause headaches and dizziness. However, the levels found in indoor air in the Palermo neighborhood are very small, and we do not expect them to cause such symptoms. Breathing low levels of TCE and PCE over time may pose some additional risk of developing cancer, depending on the amount of exposure and, in some cases, an individual's sensitivity to the chemical.

TCE and PCE in groundwater

TCE and PCE are commonly found in consumer products (*see below*), so it can be difficult to determine whether the chemicals found in indoor air are coming from contaminated groundwater or from another source. In our testing, we are looking to see whether the concentrations of the chemicals in your crawl space are lower or higher than inside your home. If the crawl space concentrations are lower than indoor levels, then it is likely that some or all of the chemicals are coming from another source, such as a consumer product.

TCE and PCE in consumer products

TCE and PCE may be found in a variety of consumer products, such as:

- dry-cleaned clothes
- metal degreasers
- adhesives
- automotive products
- cleaning products
- laundry aids
- aerosols
- paint removers

What you can do

• Keep your crawlspace vents open and unobstructed year-round to allow outside air to mix with the air in your crawlspace. This can help reduce the levels of chemicals that may be in your crawlspace. If you do not know how to open your vents, please call us and we will help you locate and open them.

There are also things you can do to limit the amount of these chemicals in your indoor air from household sources. For example:

• Keep lids tightly closed on containers of cleaners, solvents, and other chemicals that may be stored in or under your house, including garage spaces.

• Open doors and windows to increase air ventilation when you are using products that may contain TCE or PCE.

• When you bring home dry-cleaned clothing, let it air out before bringing it into your home.

• Discard products you no longer use. Call Thurston County's WasteLine at **360-786-5494** for information regarding the safe and legal disposal of hazardous household chemicals. Or visit them online at *http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health*.

For more information . . .

Please contact **Charles Bert**
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