



INDIANA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Kokomo Well Field Ground Water Contamination Site

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Background:

- The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is investigating ground water contamination in the city of Kokomo.
- Vinyl chloride and arsenic have been detected in raw water samples Kokomo has collected from its municipal water wells for analysis.
- Kokomo previously installed filtration that removes these contaminants from the raw water, and the finished water being supplied to residents for consumption is free of the contaminants.
- IDEM is conducting its investigation to determine the level of contaminants in the ground water, the source or sources of the contaminants, if possible, and what, if any, actions should be taken.
- IDEM's investigation is being conducted under a cooperative agreement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).

Kokomo Well Field Ground Water Contamination Investigation

- Levels of vinyl chloride and arsenic detected in the raw water from the Kokomo city water wells are above the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA's) maximum contaminant levels for finished drinking water.
- Beginning about October 4, 2011, the Site Investigation (SI) Section of IDEM will be in Kokomo to obtain additional ground water samples from areas near Kokomo's drinking water wells, including potential source areas. The investigation will include the collection of water samples from existing monitoring wells, but also may include private businesses or residences.
- The information derived from these samples will be used to determine the levels of, and possibly the source of, the ground water contamination.
- Representatives from IDEM may request to access your business or residential property to take a ground water sample. IDEM may also ask to take a drinking water sample from your business or residence as part of the investigation.
- You will not be charged for the laboratory sampling, and IDEM will be providing you with the sample results from the analysis conducted on your property.
- Your participation in this sampling event is voluntary but strongly encouraged.

Environmental Impacts:

- Left unchecked, a plume of ground water contamination, such as the one in Kokomo, will move with the flow of ground water and can become more widespread.
- Vinyl chloride is a manufactured chemical that is used to make polyvinyl chloride (PVC). PVC is used to make a variety of plastic products, including pipes, wire and cable coatings, and packaging materials. Vinyl chloride is also a breakdown product of other chemicals, such as tetrachloroethylene and trichloroethylene. The effects of drinking water that contains high levels of vinyl chloride are unknown. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has determined that vinyl chloride is a known carcinogen. It has not been proven that vinyl chloride causes birth defects in humans, but studies in animals suggest that vinyl chloride might affect growth and development. Animal studies also suggest that infants and young children might be more susceptible than adults to vinyl chloride-induced cancer.
- Approximately 90 percent of industrial arsenic in the U.S. is currently used as a wood preservative, but arsenic is, or has, also been used in paints, dyes, metals, drugs, soaps, and semi-conductors. Arsenic

was used in the manufacture of plate glass in the early 20th century and has also been historically used in agricultural applications, mining, and smelting operations. Arsenic has been linked to cancer of the bladder, lungs, skin, kidney, nasal passages, liver, and prostate. Non-cancer effects of arsenic can include thickening and discoloration of the skin, stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, numbness in hands and feet, partial paralysis and blindness.

IDEM's Role:

- IDEM is responsible for protecting human health and the environment while providing for safe industrial, agricultural, commercial, and governmental operations vital to a prosperous economy.
- By conducting this investigation, IDEM is better able to determine what actions are needed to ensure that the residents of Kokomo have water that is safe to drink and use.

Citizen's Role:

- Kokomo residents and businesses can assist IDEM by allowing its staff to take samples from their place of business or from their residential well, if needed.

More Information:

- For questions and concerns about IDEM's environmental investigation, please contact Dan Chesterson, IDEM project manager, at (317) 234-3505, toll free at (800) 451-6027 ext. 4-3505 or, by e-mail, at dchester@idem.IN.gov.
- For more information about IDEM's Site Investigations Program, please visit IDEM's website at www.idem.IN.gov/4143.htm.
- For health-related questions, please contact one of the following:
 - The Federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), at (800) 621-8431.
 - Don P. Zent, M.D. with the Howard County Health Department, at (765) 456-2403.
- For media inquiries, please contact Barry Sneed, IDEM public information officer, at (317) 232-8596, (800) 451-6027 ext. 2-8596 or, by e-mail, at bsneed@idem.IN.gov.