**Description**

Tetrachloroethene (PCE) is a chemical (chlorinated solvent) that is common in cleaning fabrics (spot or dry cleaning), metal cleaning and vapor degreasing operations, transformer fluids, and to make other chemicals. Products like water repellants, brake cleaner, silicone lubricants, spot removers, adhesives, wood cleaners, shoe polish, ink and paint strippers may contain PCE. PCE is also known as perchloroethylene, perchlor, or perc.

**Potential Sources**

- PCE from a spill or leak can move through the soil and mix with groundwater, contaminating the water that people use.
- PCE can evaporate from soil and groundwater, and the gas (vapor) can then get into buildings by moving through soil, or even inside sewer lines. This movement is known as vapor intrusion.
- Even with special equipment, it can be difficult for environmental professionals to figure out if PCE in the indoor air is from vapor intrusion or if it is from everyday product use.

**Routes of Exposure and Potential Health Impacts**

- You can be exposed to PCE in two different ways:
  - Drinking water that contains PCE; and
  - Breathing air that contains PCE gas.
- The United States Environmental Protection Agency (U. S. EPA) classifies PCE as “likely carcinogenic to humans.”
- Potential health effects from PCE depend on how much, how long, how often, and in what way(s) you are exposed.
- Young children, the elderly, and people with on-going health concerns may be more at risk for negative health effects.
- Breathing and/or drinking high levels of PCE can cause health effects other than cancer. Please contact the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) for additional information on PCE’s potential health impacts, or visit their website (see below).

**Reduce Exposure**

There are things you may be able to do to reduce your exposure to PCE:

- If you use a private well for your home water supply, have the water tested regularly to make sure it is safe to drink. While IDEM does not regulate private water wells, information is available on testing and health-based recommendations (see below).
- Follow the label instructions when you use and get rid of products containing PCE.
- Choose a dry cleaning business that uses “green” cleaners instead of chlorinated solvents like PCE.
- If you choose to go with a dry cleaner that uses PCE, consider leaving your clothes in a sheltered outdoor area for a few hours when you bring clothes home from the dry cleaners. This allows them to release small amounts of PCE into the outdoor air rather than into the air inside your home.

**IDEM’s Role and Responsibility**

- The Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) is responsible for protecting public health and the environment while providing for safe industrial, agricultural, commercial, and governmental operations vital to a prosperous economy.
- IDEM’s Office of Water Quality enforces the federal limit on how much PCE is allowed in our drinking water supplied by cities or companies.
IDEM’s Office of Air Quality regulates the amount of PCE that businesses can release into the outdoor air.
IDEM’s Office of Land Quality (OLQ) regulates PCE disposal and the potential cleanup of spills.
IDEM OLQ provides cleanup recommendations for PCE and other chlorinated solvents based on potential health effects (see below).
IDEM OLQ works with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) to make sure that people are following the rules for PCE use, and that they collect groundwater samples when they are cleaning up PCE.

Additional Information

For more information on PCE, please visit the ATSDR website at http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/substances/toxsubstance.asp?toxid=48
Alternatively, you can call the CDC-INFO line for ATSDR’s information on PCE: 800-232-4636 (M-F 8a-8p Eastern in English or Spanish) or TTY 888-232-6348.
For more information on vapor intrusion please visit IDEM’s website at http://www.in.gov/idem/cleanups/2357.htm
IDEM does not regulate private wells. However, if you use a private well, it is still important to be aware of health-based recommendations: https://in.gov/idem/cleanwater/2452.htm
For more information on certified laboratories, please visit the Indiana State Department of Health’s website at https://www.in.gov/isdh/24859.htm
Visit the Indiana State Department’s Environmental Public Health Division’s Indoor Air Quality program for more information on indoor air at https://www.in.gov/isdh/24347.htm
If you suspect you have been exposed to PCE and have health-based concerns, please consult with your physician for information.
For questions and concerns about PCE contamination or environmental cleanup, contact IDEM’s Office of Land Quality at (317) 232-3215 or (800) 451-6027, ext. 2-3215.
To report an accidental release or spill, call IDEM’s 24-Hour Spill Line at (888) 233-7745 (toll free).