



## Ash Street Groundwater Contamination Investigation

Office of Land Quality – Federal Programs Section – Site Investigation Program

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100 N. Senate Ave., Indianapolis, IN 46204

### **Background Information:**

- An investigation of the site, centered near the six-way intersection of Ash Street, North 11<sup>th</sup> Street and Lafayette Avenue in Terre Haute (Vigo County), began in 2014 when groundwater contamination was discovered at a property located at 1033 Lafayette Ave. This is in the northern vicinity of downtown Terre Haute between Union Hospital and the Wabash Valley Railroad Museum.
- The contaminants include chlorinated volatile organic compounds (e.g., tetrachloroethylene, etc.)
- City of Terre Haute groundwater wells are located downgradient towards the Wabash River in west-central Terre Haute.
- The Indiana American Water Company currently operates a public water supply wellfield (Terre Haute Wellfield) southwest of the site that supplies drinking water to a population of 61,953 residents in a blended system. This system sells water to nearby smaller communities including: Seelyville, Riley, St. Mary-Of-The-Woods, Sullivan, and Farmersburg.
- The City of Terre Haute's drinking water has been tested and does not exceed the U.S. EPA's Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) for chlorinated volatile organic compounds in drinking water under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.
- Chlorinated volatile organic compounds include many chemicals with broad industrial and commercial applications, such as metal parts degreasers or dry-cleaning solvents such as tetrachloroethylene. These chemicals can also serve as feedstocks for manufacture of other materials, like vinyl chloride.
- Tetrachloroethylene is a nonflammable, colorless volatile liquid used as a dry-cleaning agent and metal degreasing solvent. It is used to manufacture other chemicals and has a 100-day half-life. Although much tetrachloroethylene is released into air from dry cleaning industry, it breaks down more slowly in water and can migrate through groundwater or soil and up into the air of homes and buildings through vapor intrusion.
- Trichloroethylene is a nonflammable, colorless volatile liquid used as a solvent to degrease metal parts and as a chemical feedstock, especially in hydrofluorocarbon refrigerants. It is also used by the textile industry for processing cotton and wool and is a common component in adhesives, lubricants, paints and paint strippers, pesticides and cold metal cleaners. Most trichloroethylene is released into the atmosphere by evaporation, primarily from degreasing operations, where it breaks down over its seven-day half-life. It degrades very slowly in subsurface and is highly mobile in soil. It can diffuse from contaminated groundwater and soil and migrate into air via vapor intrusion.
- Under a cooperative agreement with the U.S. EPA, IDEM's Site Investigation Program will conduct a site inspection to determine the extent of groundwater impacted and to attempt to identify the source(s) of the groundwater contamination discovered in the Terre Haute wellfield.

### **Next Steps:**

- During the summer of 2025, IDEM's Site Investigation Program will conduct a groundwater investigation in Terre Haute to determine if any residences or businesses that utilize private drinking water wells are impacted by the chlorinated volatile organic compound groundwater contamination.
- IDEM is requesting access to private property in various locations to collect groundwater from municipal wells and subsurface soils and groundwater accessed by soil boring to aid in this investigation.
  - Property owners who are asked to aid in this investigation will be asked to sign a property access agreement.
  - The sampling will be done at no cost to the property owner.
  - IDEM will provide the property owners with their groundwater sampling results at no cost.

### **Environmental and Health Impacts:**

- Chlorinated volatile organic compounds have not been detected in household drinking water provided by the Indiana American Water Company. However, it is unknown if the contaminated groundwater is impacting private residential and business wells in the area.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has classified tetrachloroethylene, trichloroethylene, and vinyl chloride as known human carcinogens.
- People can be exposed to chlorinated volatile organic compounds from ingesting contaminated water or by breathing chlorinated gases released from contaminated water.

### **Additional Information:**

- The public may direct questions and concerns regarding IDEM's environmental investigation in the Terre Haute area, including additional information on sampling results to date, environmental impacts of chlorinated volatile organic compounds, and potential drinking water impacts, to John Hockemeyer, IDEM Project Manager, at 317-232-5675; toll free at 800-451-6027; or by e-mail at [JHockeme@idem.IN.gov](mailto:JHockeme@idem.IN.gov).
- Questions and concerns about health-related impacts should be directed to the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) at 312-886-1462 or to the Vigo County Health Department at 812-462-3431.
- Along with this fact sheet, IDEM is distributing the [Tetrachloroethylene \(PERC\)](#) and [Trichloroethylene \(TCE\) ToxFAQs™](#) fact sheets from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry that describes chlorinated volatile organic compounds and their effects in greater detail. These ToxFAQs can also be accessed on the ATSDR website at <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxFAQs/ToxFAQsLanding.aspx>.
- For additional information on the Safe Drinking Water Act, visit U.S. EPA's website at [epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-water-act](http://epa.gov/laws-regulations/summary-clean-water-act).
- For information about IDEM's Site Investigation Program, visit IDEM's website at [idem.IN.gov/cleanups/investigation-and-cleanup-programs/site-investigation](http://idem.IN.gov/cleanups/investigation-and-cleanup-programs/site-investigation).
- The news media may contact IDEM's media department, at 317-232-8596 or by e-mail at [media@idem.IN.gov](mailto:media@idem.IN.gov).