Air Sampling to be Conducted in Vicinity of Rickett's Dry Cleaning Site

Village of Ballston Spa, New York

Community Update **January 2017**

If you have general questions or would like additional information regarding the site, please contact one of the following:

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If you would like information on general environmental concerns or the federal Superfund hazardous waste program, have concerns or complaints about the Superfund program, or if you seek assistance in resolving site-specific issues that were not fully addressed by the EPA, please contact:

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SITE BACKGROUND

The Rickett's Dry Cleaning Site is located in a mixed commercial and residential area in the village of Ballston Spa on County Route 50. The site was the location of a family owned dry cleaner/laundromat that went out of business in 2014. The site has been impacted by a historic release of PCE (tetrachloroethene) used in dry cleaning activities.

EPA ASSESSMENT

In July 2016, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation requested that the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) perform an environmental assessment of the site. In August 2016, the EPA collected air samples to determine if dry cleaning chemicals have been released into the environment. The following contaminants were detected in air underneath and/or inside the dry cleaner above EPA health benchmarks: chloroform; TCE (trichloroethylene); PCE; vinyl chloride; benzene; and naphthalene.

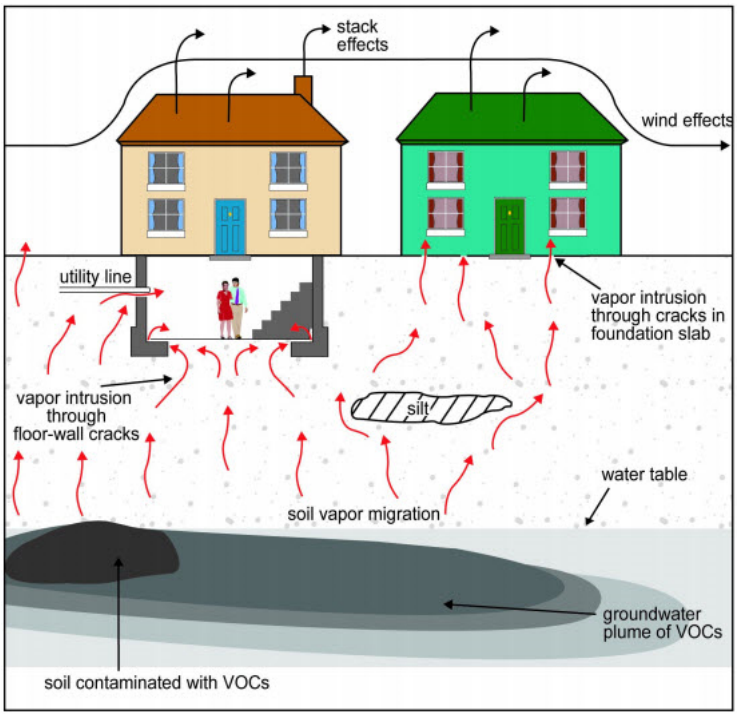
FUTURE ACTIVITIES

EPA's sampling has confirmed that there has been a release of chemicals at the facility, and that these chemicals may be in the groundwater which flows in a southeasterly direction beneath homes in the adjacent neighborhood. Although the groundwater in this area is not used for drinking, the EPA will be evaluating homes in this area for potential "vapor intrusion" impacts (see reverse for more information about vapor intrusion).

During the winter of 2017, the EPA will be collecting samples from approximately 50 individual residences and some businesses to determine which structures may be impacted by vapor intrusion. The sampling process will include the installation of air sampling equipment and the subsequent collection of air samples from beneath and within the structures. Sampling results will be provided by EPA directly to the property owner. The generalized results of the sampling effort will be provided to the village and may be available to the public, but will not include identifying property or owner information so as to protect the privacy of the homeowners.

Based upon EPA's evaluation of the air sampling data, EPA will take action for all structures that are determined to be adversely impacted by vapor intrusion. This action will include the option for property owners to have a system installed which will eliminate contaminated vapors from entering the structure. These systems will be installed and maintained by the EPA at no cost to the property owner.

General Questions and Answers about Vapor Intrusion

Question	*Answer*
What is vapor intrusion?	When chemicals or petroleum products are spilled on the ground or leak from underground storage tanks, they can give off gases, or vapors that can get inside buildings. Common products that can cause vapor intrusion are gasoline or diesel fuel, dry cleaning solvents and industrial de-greasers. The vapors move through the soil and seep through cracks in basements, foundations, sewer lines and other openings. Vapor intrusion is a concern because vapors can build up to a point where the health of residents or workers in those buildings could be at risk.  VOCs = Volatile Organic Compounds. The chemicals found in the groundwater at the Rickett's site are VOCs.
What are health concerns related to vapor intrusion?	When vapor intrusion does occur, the health risk will vary based on the type of chemicals, the levels of the chemical found, the length of exposure and the health of exposed individuals. Low-level chemical exposures over many years may raise the lifetime risk of cancer or chronic disease. More information on the chemicals at the Ricketts site can be found at: https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp.
How is vapor intrusion discovered?	Samples of gas in the soil or groundwater are first collected near a contaminated site. If no contamination is found near a site, then vapor intrusion should not be a problem. If contamination is found, depending on the type, the search may be widened to include samples closer to or on individual properties. The next step is to take vapor samples from the soil under the home's foundation; these are called slab, or sub-slab samples. These samples are often co-located with indoor air samples to assess potential transport into the interior of the home.
What happens if a problem is found?	The most common solution is to install systems often used to reduce naturally occurring radon that seeps into homes in some geographic areas. These systems, called radon mitigation systems, remove soil vapors from below basements or foundations before they enter homes. Vapors are vented outside of the homes where they become dispersed and harmless. These systems use minimal electricity and do not affect heating and cooling efficiency. They also prevent radon from entering homes – an added health benefit especially in radon prone areas. Once the source of the vapors is eliminated, the systems should no longer be needed.

For additional information: https://www.epa.gov/vaporintrusion