It's your Right to Know about the

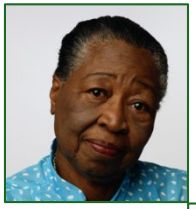
Toxic Chemicals

in your community

Introduction to the Toxics Release Inventory

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Common questions about toxic chemical releases



*Are industries in my town **increasing** or **reducing** the amounts of chemicals they release to the environment?*

*What are the **top chemicals released** in my town? How much is being released and **by whom**?*

*Does the factory near my daughter's school release **cancer-causing chemicals**?*

EPA's Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) can help you find the answers!

Introduction to TRI for Communities

- What is the Toxics Release Inventory (TRI)?
- Why is it important to communities?
- How can you access TRI data?
- What can you do about toxic releases in your community?
- Who can you contact for more information?

What is TRI?

- TRI is an EPA information resource that can help you learn about toxic chemical releases from certain facilities **in your neighborhood.**
- TRI can tell you about:

Releases

Waste transfers

Recycling

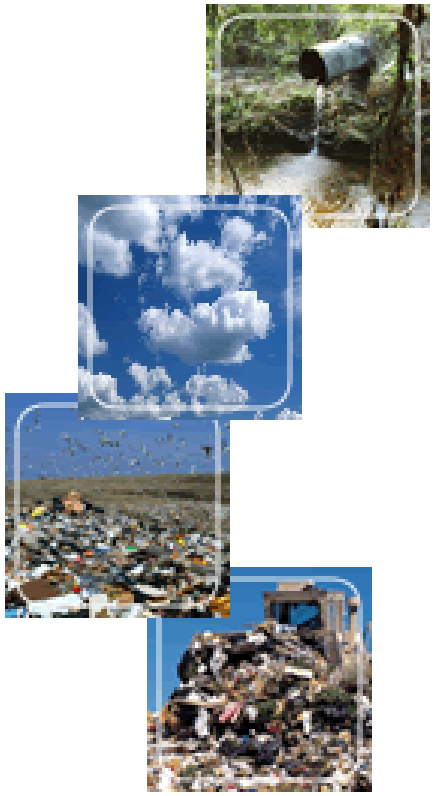
Pollution prevention

- TRI includes data from **more than 21,000 facilities** across the country and covers **767 individual chemicals and 33 chemical categories.**

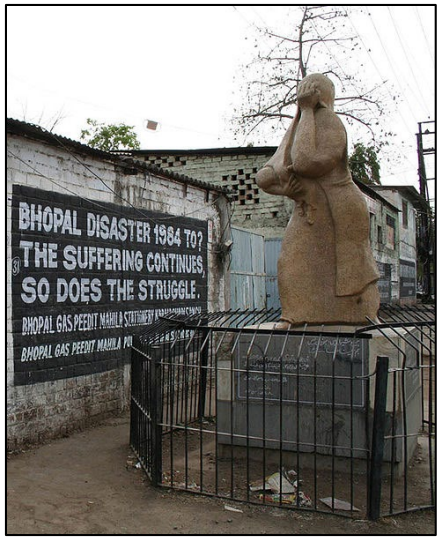
TRI is EPA's Premier "Right-to-Know" Program

Right to Know (RTK):

- We all have the right to know about the chemicals to which we may be exposed to in our daily lives.
- This principle is the foundation of Section 313 of the **Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 (EPCRA).**
- This law requires EPA to collect, maintain, and provide public access to the TRI data.



Why was the Toxics Release Inventory created?



Bhopal memorial for those killed and disabled by the 1984 toxic gas release

Bhopal, India **December 1984**

- Methyl isocyanate gas was released at a Union Carbide chemical plant
- Thousands died the first night, thousands more since
- Survivors continue to suffer with permanent disabilities

Institute, West Virginia **August 1985**

- Chemical release at a similar facility in the U.S.
- More than 100 people hospitalized

- These events led to the passage of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) by Congress in 1986, which mandated the creation of the TRI Program.

Why is TRI important to communities?

TRI can help communities:

- Identify **how many TRI facilities** operate in the community **and where they are located.**
- Identify **which chemicals are being released** by TRI facilities.
- **Track increases or reductions** of toxic chemical releases from facilities located in the community over time.
- **Compare the toxic chemical releases and pollution prevention efforts of facilities** in one location with similar facilities across the country.
- **Prioritize efforts to reduce pollution** from facilities located in the area.

What is a “release?”

- A **"release"** refers to different ways that toxic chemicals from industrial facilities enter the:


Air

Water

Land

- The likelihood of residents being exposed to toxic chemicals depends on the type of release and other factors.

What facilities must report to TRI?

1. Facility must be in a **TRI-covered industry sector or category**, including:

Manufacturing

Coal/Oil Electricity Generation

Certain Mining Facilities

Hazardous Waste Management

Federal Facilities

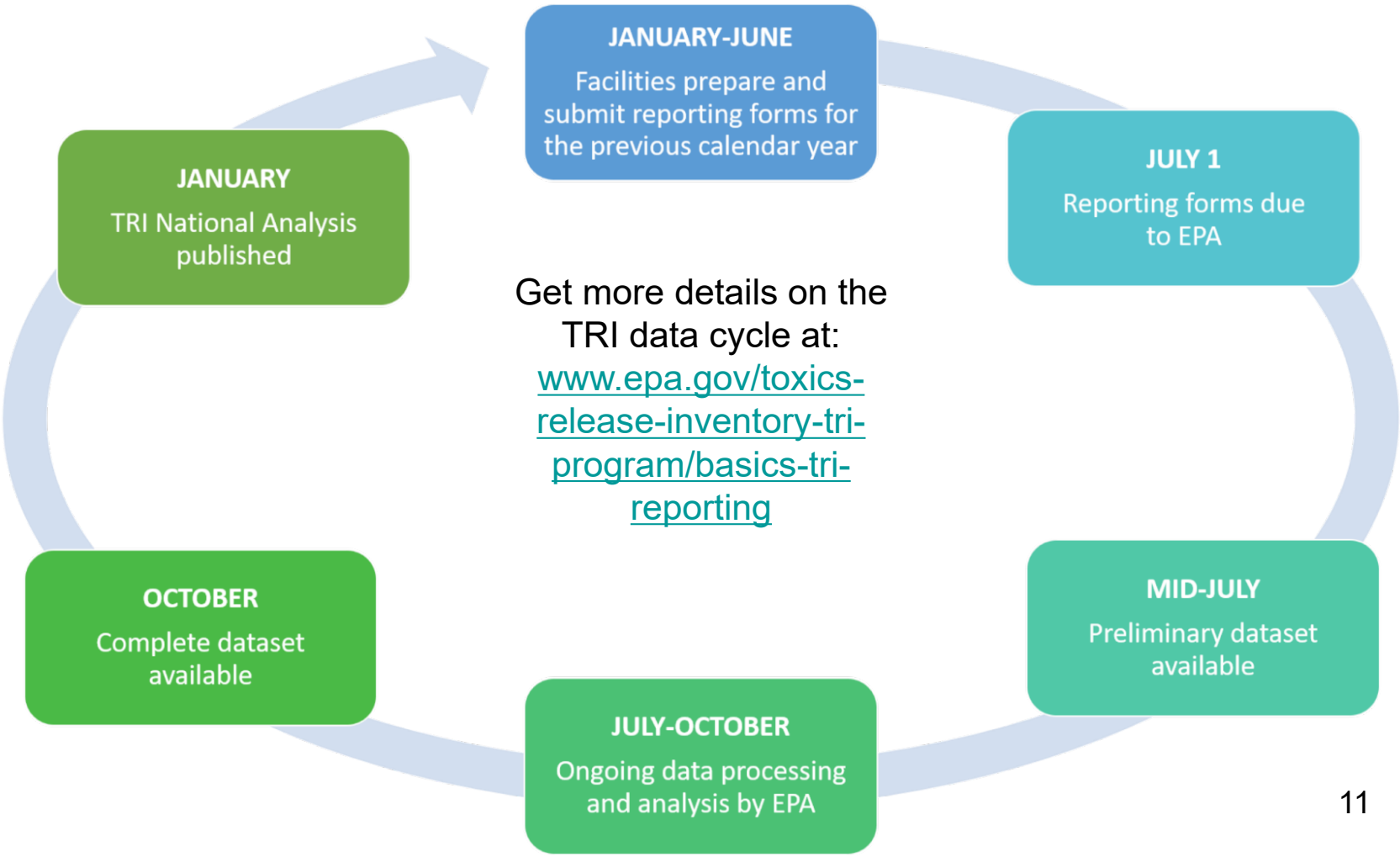
2. Facility must have the equivalent of at least **10 full-time employees**

3. Facility must manufacture, process or use more than a **certain amount of a TRI-listed toxic chemical per year**

What information do facilities report to TRI?

- On-site releases of TRI chemicals to:
  - Air
  - Water
  - Land
- Transfer of chemical waste to off-site locations
- Waste management:
  - Recycling
  - Treatment
  - Energy Recovery
- Pollution prevention activities

Annual TRI Data Cycle

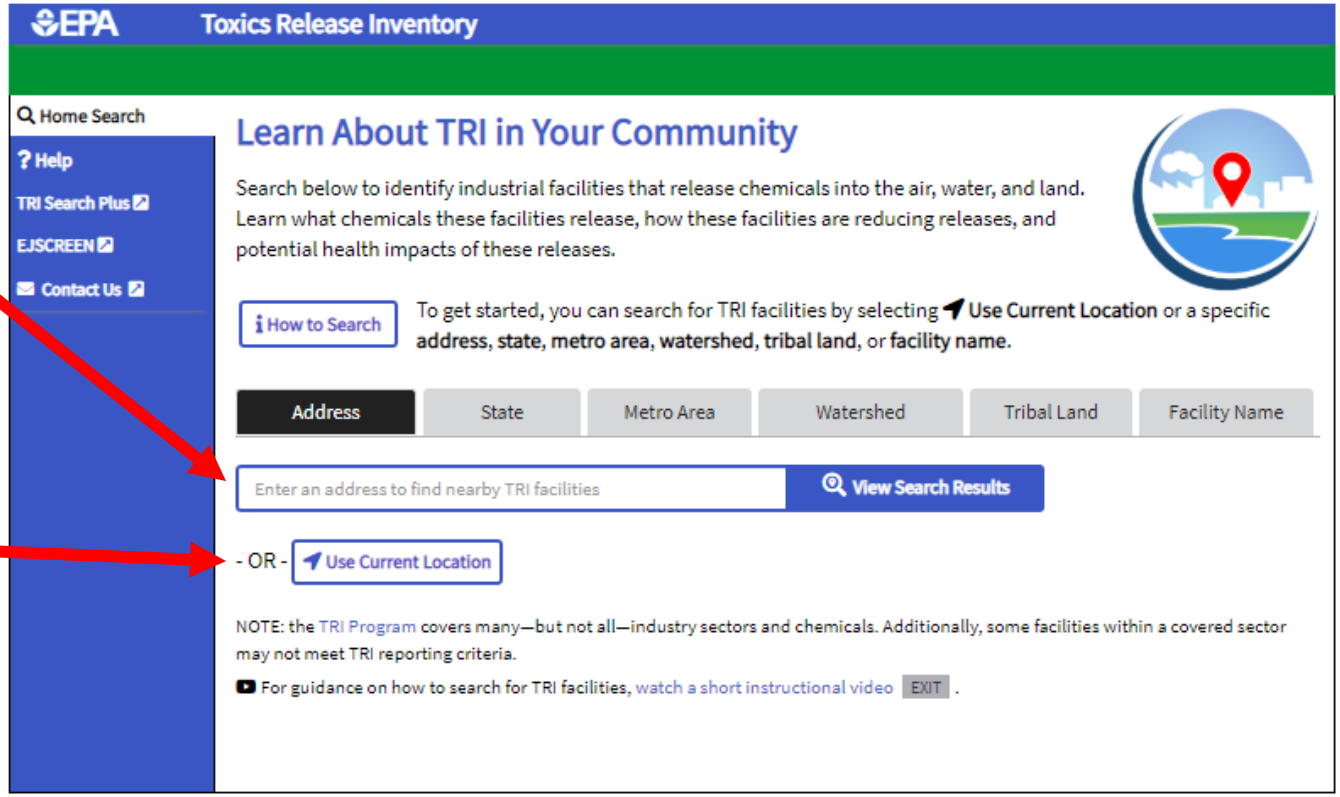


Get more details on the TRI data cycle at: www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program/basics-tri-reporting

Find TRI facilities and learn about toxic chemicals in your community

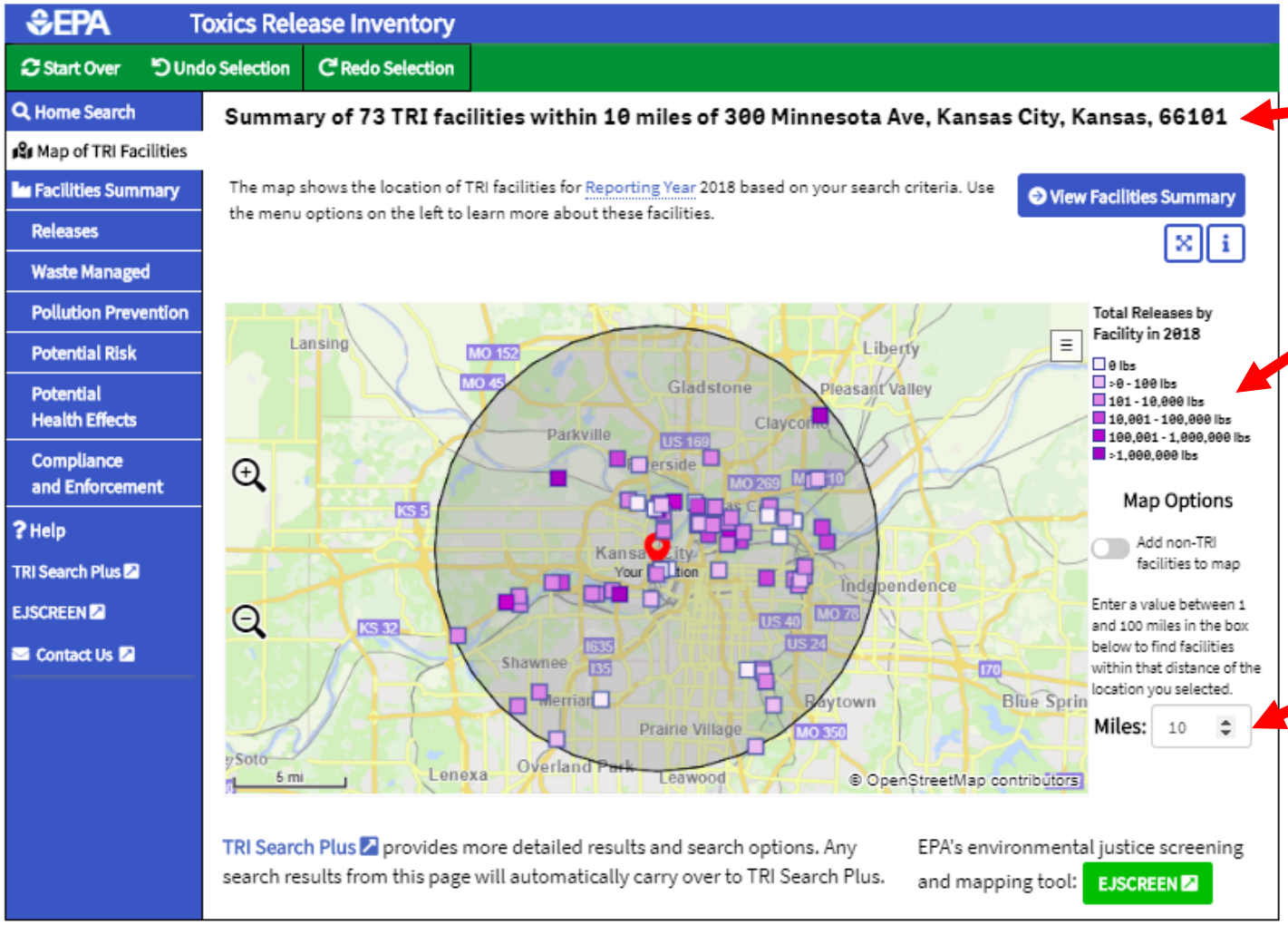
Enter an address or place name. Then click "View Search Results" to see all TRI facilities located within 10 miles that reported to EPA in the most recent reporting year.

Another search option is "Current Location." *(Unavailable on some computer equipment/ devices and/or browser settings)*



TRI search is also available in Spanish

Mapping TRI Facilities



Shows the number of TRI facilities within 10 miles of your selected search location.

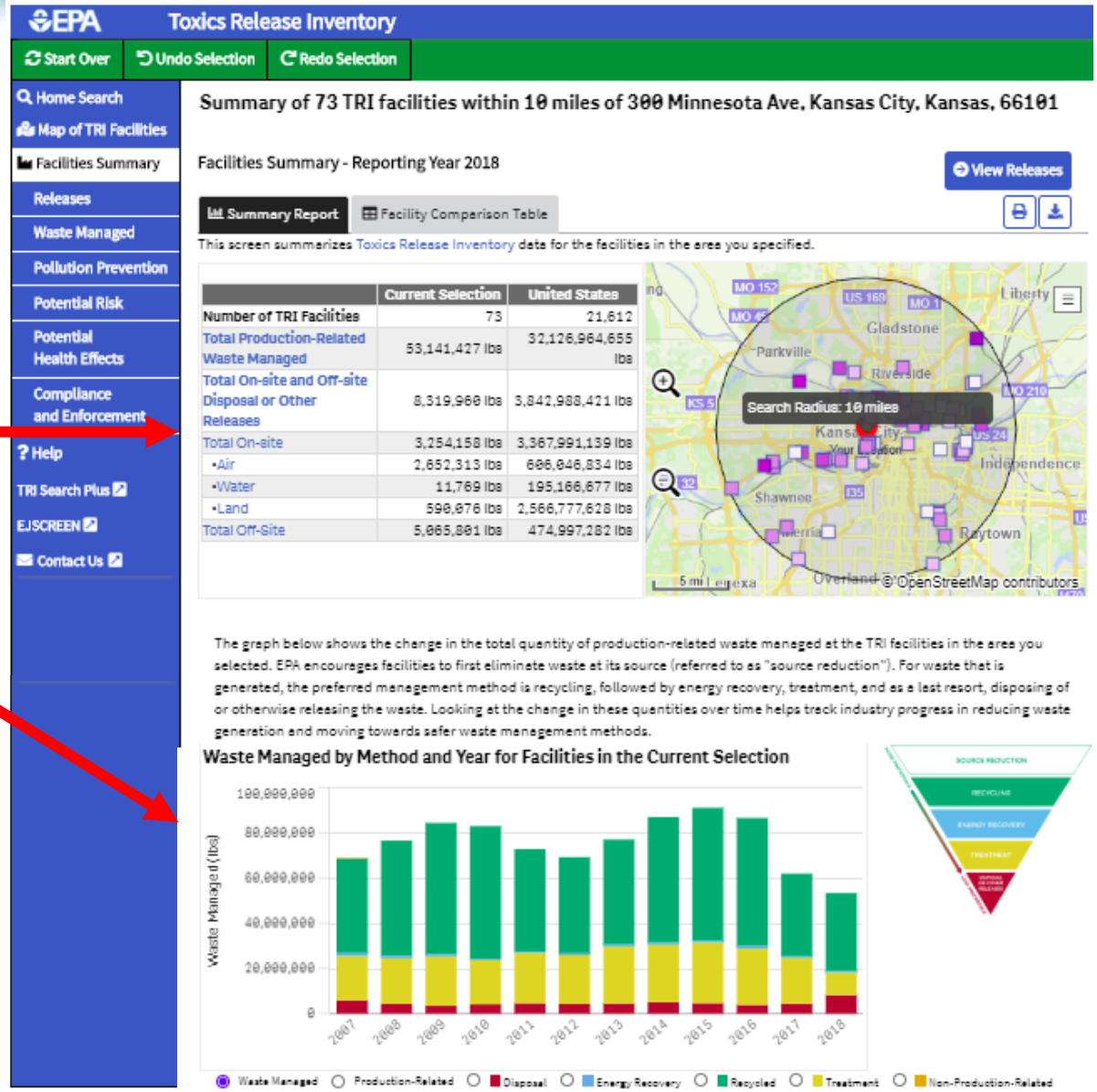
Facilities are shown as color-coded squares (in shades of deep purple to light purple/white) to identify the range of release quantities for each of them.

Can view TRI facilities 1 to 100 miles from the center of the selected search location. *(The default radius is 10 miles.)*

TRI Summary Report

Basic “Quick Facts” summary about all TRI facilities located within 10 miles of your selected search location.

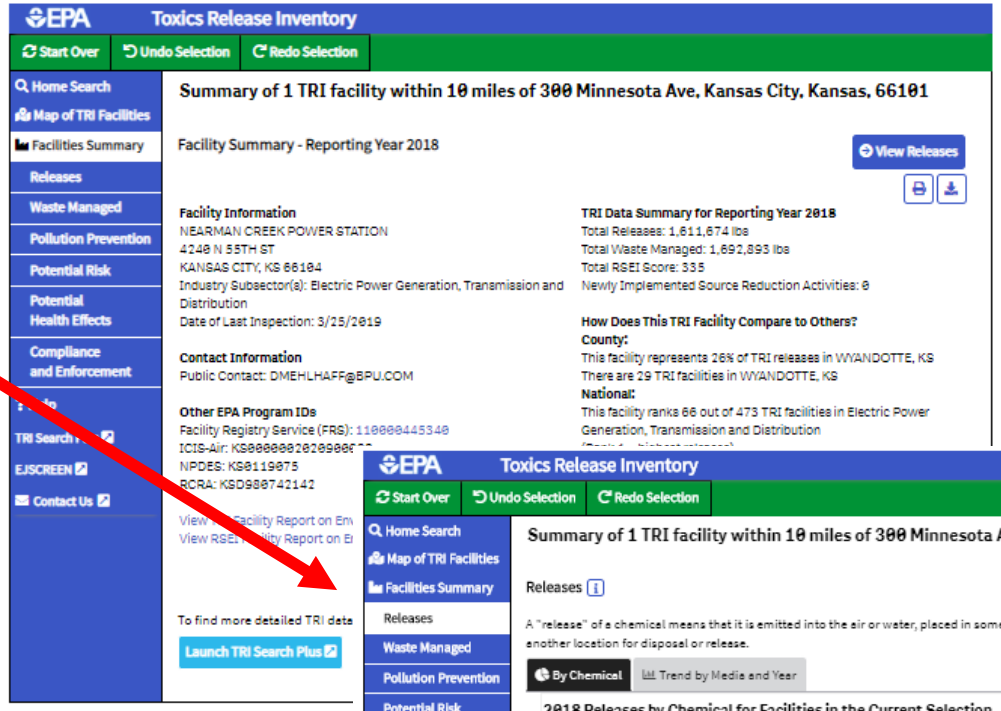
Includes a trends chart that shows the amounts of waste managed and toxic chemicals released over the most recent 12 years of TRI reporting.



TRI Data About Individual Facilities

Summary data about an individual TRI facility.

Various types of pie charts, trends graphs, tables, etc. provide more information about an individual facility.



TRI and Pollution Prevention

- The goal of pollution prevention (P2) is to **eliminate or reduce the creation of pollutants** (also called "source reduction").
- TRI tracks industrial facilities' progress toward this goal and collects data about **effective P2 practices**.
- TRI can be used to:
  - Identify facilities that are implementing P2 to reduce their toxic emissions.
  - Promote "tech transfer" of innovative P2 activities from facilities that have successfully used P2 to facilities that could be doing more.

TRI P2 Search Tool

www.epa.gov/tri/p2

Click to see how this facility has prevented pollution over time.

This facility treats (destroys) most of its toluene waste; other textile mills release a higher percentage.

Is it safe to live near facilities that release toxic chemicals?

The answer depends on many factors:

- How much has been released?
- How toxic are the chemicals?
- Where did the chemicals go?
- How much of the chemicals did people breathe, eat or drink?
- How often and how long were people exposed?
- Were the people exposed in a high risk group?

Note: many of the releases from TRI facilities are regulated under various EPA programs and requirements designed to limit harm to people's health and the environment.

What are the limitations of TRI data?

- **Annual data** – collected from TRI reporting facilities once/year
- Covers some, but **not all toxic chemicals and not all industry sectors**
- **Small facilities are not included** (under 10 employees)
- **Does not cover all sources of pollution**, e.g. cars and trucks
- **Does not describe how long or how often chemicals were released**

For more information, see *"Factors to Consider When Using TRI Data"* at: www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program/factors-consider-when-using-toxics-release-inventory-data

TRI information is only one piece of the puzzle

While TRI provides important information about toxic chemical releases in your community, seeing the whole picture requires additional information about other types of environmental releases, as well as air monitoring, compliance with environmental regulations and more. Other information to consider can include:

- ❑ Motor vehicle emissions
- ❑ Gasoline stations
- ❑ Dry cleaners
- ❑ Car painting shops
- ❑ Drum burnings/forest fires
- ❑ Underground storage tanks
- ❑ Abandoned hazardous waste sites
- ❑ Drinking water quality
- ❑ Lead paint in homes
- ❑ And more...




EPA's MyEnvironment tool provides more information about your community

Go to www.epa.gov/myenvironment and enter your location to get detailed information about environmental conditions in your area.

What You Can Do

- Use TRI data (along with other environmental Information) to discuss your community's environmental health concerns with:
  - Neighborhood associations
  - Community grassroots groups
  - Environmental organizations
  - Non-profit planning organizations
  - Local colleges and researchers
  - Environmental, natural resources, health and/or planning government agencies
  - Local and State elected officials
  - Industry trade associations
  - Industrial facilities
- Use TRI P2 data to encourage local facilities to implement new P2 activities or expand their existing P2 activities.
- Find out if a facility of concern is in compliance with EPA laws and regulations using EPA's Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) at https://echo.epa.gov/.
- Report a suspected violation at epa.gov/tips or contact your state environmental agency (contacts listed at: www.epa.gov/home/health-and-environmental-agencies-us-states-and-territories).

For More Information About TRI:

- Contact your **EPA Regional TRI Coordinator:** www.epa.gov/tri/contacts
- Call EPA's **TRI Information Center:** 1-800-424-9346. Select menu option #3 for TRI.
- Visit the **TRI Program's website**: www.epa.gov/tri and www.epa.gov/tri/communities.
- Check out the **TRI Pollution Prevention (P2) Search Tool**: www.epa.gov/tri/p2.
- Contact the **TRI Help Desk** by email: tri.help@epa.gov.

With TRI and related EPA information, you can begin to answer your questions about your community

I thought a factory in my community released a lot of pollution. TRI showed me that this factory dramatically reduced the amount of toxic chemicals it released into the environment over the past twelve years.

I found out using TRI which chemicals are released in the greatest quantities. I'm going to find out what can be done to reduce those releases.

TRI showed me that the factory by my daughter's school releases chemicals that could potentially cause cancer. Now I'm going to find out more.

TRI provides information to better understand toxic chemical releases in your community.