

Olin Chemical Superfund Site
Public Meeting
November 15, 2010

Questions and Answers

1. **Q:** OU3 groundwater sampling: How many groundwater wells are on the Olin property and off site?

A: There are approximately 220 monitoring wells across the entire study area; an additional 15 to 20 new wells are being installed as part of the current investigation. About half the wells are located on the Olin property and half are off the property. Collectively, these wells extend up to about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile away from the Olin property.

2. **Q:** How is the MA DPH cancer study related to the Olin Superfund Site?

A: EPA and MA DPH routinely coordinate on matters of potential exposure at Superfund sites through the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). Local officials and members of the community are concerned that there may have been a connection between contamination in the Maple Meadow Brook aquifer (which is the location of a former well field for the Town of Wilmington) and elevated cancer rates. MADPH is conducting a cancer study in an effort to objectively answer questions related to possible **past** exposure through the Maple Meadow Brook well field (which has not been a public water supply source since 2002). EPA, through the Superfund program, is tasked with determining possible **current** and **future** contaminant exposures to all media, including groundwater in the Maple Meadow Brook aquifer, to determine the most appropriate alternatives to clean up the site.

3. **Q:** When does the cleanup end and what are the major steps to get to the end? How long will it take to cleanup the site?

A: The duration and finality of a site cleanup is highly dependent on the scope and complexity of the environmental problems. Once a decision to remediate is made, soil and sediment cleanups can often be completed in a few years or less. Surface water and groundwater problems often take decades or longer to remedy. The first major step is to complete the **Remedial Investigation, which is a necessary step to delineate the full nature and extent of site contamination, and provide an assessment of the human health and ecological risks.** If excess current or future potential risks are documented, a Feasibility Study is performed to evaluate clean up options for the site. EPA will then select a preferred cleanup option for the site in a Proposed Plan for public comment. EPA anticipates issuing a **Proposed Plan** for public review and comment in 2012 or 2013. After public discussion, EPA will then issue a **Record of Decision** which will select the cleanup approach(es) to be used at

the Site. EPA will then attempt to negotiate an agreement with Olin and certain other Potentially Responsible Parties (PRPs) to implement or fund the cleanup.

4. **Q:** Is the plume still encroaching into the residential wells?

A: Contamination has been found in two wells in a residential area south of the Olin site. At EPA's request, Olin has agreed to provide bottled water to those residents. Olin continues to sample private wells on a continual basis and will be installing additional monitoring wells to further evaluate plume migration. It is important to note that the nearby municipal supply wells in Maple Meadow Brook withdrew approximately 3 million gallons a day from the aquifer. These wells ceased operation in late 2002. Current water level and analytical data from the new and existing wells will help assess the plume's migration in the period since the municipal wells were shut down.

5. **Q:** Why isn't Olin paying for this (MADPH) cancer study?

A: EPA does not have the statutory authority to conduct public health studies, and therefore does not have any legal or regulatory authority to compel Olin or the other PRPs to fund the cancer study.

6. **Q:** How much is needed to complete this MADPH study?

A. According to the MADPH representative, it will cost about \$20,000 to hire a part time epidemiologist and speed up the time-line on finishing the health study.

7. **Q:** Why has it taken so long to go from taking samples to getting results?

A: Each and every environmental sample collected undergoes a rigorous quality assurance review process referred to as data validation. This process requires a chemist to review numerous sample collection and analytical laboratory criteria (i.e., holding time, storage temperature, sample quantity, sample preservation, equipment calibration, etc.) and is necessary to ensure the results are accurate and reproducible. This is a particularly labor-intensive process at the Olin site due to the large number of contaminants, many of which are comingled and not common (i.e., hydrazine, formaldehyde, Opex, Kempore, etc.).

8. **Q:** What are the chances of contamination getting into the Aberjona River?

A: There is no indication that groundwater contamination has or will migrate that far to the south or east of the Olin property. Surface water contamination has been documented in the East Ditch in the past, but it is unclear what impact this has or if impacts from the Olin property extend beyond the Upper New Boston Drainage Way. The current surface water and sediment sampling efforts will provide additional information.

9. **Q:** What happens to residents if their home value is impacted by the Superfund site?
How will that affect the ability to sell?

A: EPA's first concern in designating a Superfund site is protecting the health of area residents. In selling a home near a Superfund site, it is important to provide potential buyers with factual information regarding potential exposures. EPA is always willing to discuss potential site-related exposures with property owners, realtors, appraisers and potential buyers to ensure factual information is provided. In 2009, EPA concluded a national study on residential property values near Superfund sites around the country. This study and an executive summary are available on EPA's national web site at: <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/programs/recycle/effects/property.html>.

10. **Q:** Have homeowners been compensated by EPA for the lost value on a home?

A: No, EPA has no regulatory authority to compensate owners for decreases in property values.

11. **Q:** Will Olin be responsible for off-site contamination?

A: Yes, EPA believes that Olin and certain other parties that formerly operated the Olin facility are responsible for all site-related contamination located both on and extending off the Olin property.