
Pollution Investigation Looks Into Vapor Intrusion

Former Hoover Co. Site

North Canton, Ohio

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Want more information?

To learn more about the vapor intrusion investigation or if you have questions or comments about the former Hoover Co. site cleanup, please contact one of these team members:

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U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Maple Street Commerce, known as MSC, are conducting an investigation in an area near the former Hoover Co. manufacturing plant on Maple Street in North Canton. Vacuum cleaners were manufactured on the former Hoover property from the early 1900s up until 2007. Hoover used various chemicals in its decades of manufacturing and past environmental testing on and off the Hoover property in the 1990s - 2000s detected groundwater and soil impacts. Under a voluntary agreement with U.S. EPA, Hoover previously performed groundwater and soil tests, with limited soil gas tests related to the site's prior use and storage of solvents. Groundwater is an environmental term for underground water, and soil gas is a term for underground air.

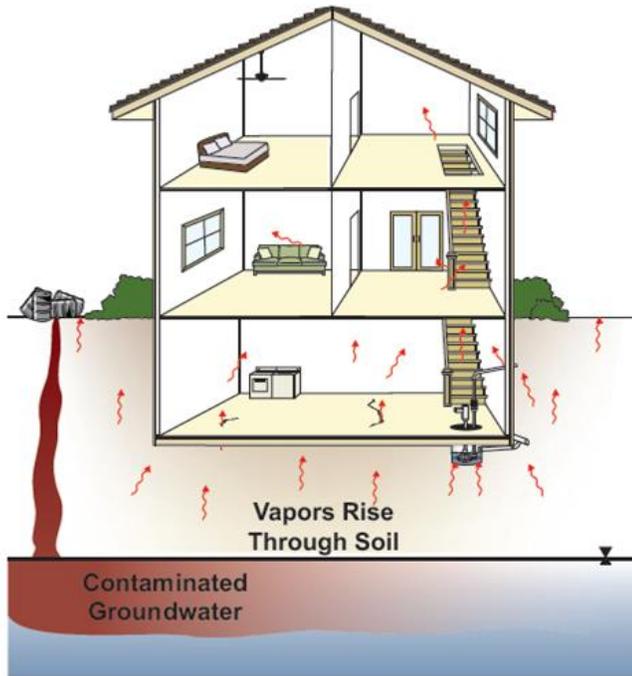
MSC acquired the property in 2008 and began a project to revitalize the former Hoover property. In the years since MSC purchased the property, U.S. EPA has revised certain environmental action standards. The current investigation is checking for a pollution problem called "vapor intrusion." Vapor intrusion occurs when contamination in the underground water or soil gives off gases that can rise up through the soil and seep into buildings through foundation cracks and holes, possibly causing unsafe indoor air quality. A family of chemicals called volatile organic compounds, or VOCs, is especially prone to vapor intrusion. In this case, investigators are concerned about the VOCs trichloroethene, or TCE, tetrachloroethene, or PCE, and vinyl chloride, which industries used as solvents.

Soil gas, sub-slab and indoor air tests are used to find vapor intrusion problems. In soil gas and sub-slab testing, probes are dug into the ground or under building foundations to test for VOC vapors trapped between soil particles. Air sampling measures the concentrations of hazardous gases in the indoor air. For air tests inside a structure, a small canister is simply placed on a table or counter for a few days and collects samples.

Purpose of investigation

U.S. EPA administers the federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, or RCRA. The law requires RCRA Corrective Action facilities, such as the former Hoover site, to demonstrate that pollution from these sites is not a health risk to the community. MSC, as the new owner, is working with U.S. EPA to evaluate Hoover's prior work, continue investigations, and determine if additional corrective action is needed based on changes in our understanding of certain chemicals and in guidance related to environmental risk. Past groundwater sampling shows contamination from the former Hoover property that may have been underneath some houses in the community. More recent groundwater tests show reduced levels off-site. However, MSC needs to collect additional information about the pollution situation in the neighborhood. The company may have to test in and around houses that were not previously believed to be at risk due to the emerging possibility for vapor intrusion.

The scientific understanding of both vapor intrusion and TCE has increased in recent years. Scientists have now set lower acceptable exposure limits for TCE. Many houses also contain some VOC vapors given off by household cleaners, solvents and paint. The challenge is to make sure concentrations inside a structure are not from contamination from the former plant and do not rise above unsafe levels due to pollution issues underground. Samples of soil gas and indoor air will help answer the question of whether vapor intrusion is occurring.



Vapor intrusion into a home.

Please understand being contacted by U.S. EPA or MSC does not mean vapor intrusion is occurring in your house. To be certain that no health risk exists, sampling will need to be done.

Drinking water not affected

Company investigations over the years have identified contamination in the area from the plant. Hoover previously made efforts to eliminate the health risks.

Residences in the target area are served by municipal water to eliminate health risks associated with contaminated drinking water wells. As a preventative measure, Hoover asked the local government to pass a groundwater ordinance that bars the issuance of permits

for the installation of new wells where contamination was present. As a result, the Stark County Health Department Resolution #3-2002 was adopted.

What does all this mean?

U.S. EPA staff are working with MSC to obtain the most accurate and up-to-date information. Agency staff, along with Ohio Department of Health and Stark County Health Department, are available to assist with any questions you may have regarding sampling.

If samples are collected and it appears vapor intrusion is occurring, health department toxicologists can help you understand the results and tell you whether the levels of TCE or PCE are likely to cause health problems. MSC is prepared and required to stop or prevent any current and future exposures to pollution released from the former plant.