

EPA Plans Urgent Cleanup At Former Dry Cleaners

Tuchman Cleaners Time-Critical Cleanup Site

Indianapolis, Indiana

September 2012

You're invited

A public meeting to discuss the Tuchman cleanup is scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 3, 2012, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., at the Marion County Public Health Department, 4012 N. Rural St., Indianapolis (enter from 40th Street).

Officials are interested in your opinions and comments. Community interviews are scheduled on Tuesday, Oct. 2, from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., in the Marion County Public Health Department basement conference room at 3901 Meadows Drive, Indianapolis.

For more information

For questions, comments or more information about the cleanup at the Tuchman Cleaners site, contact these EPA team members:

For technical questions:

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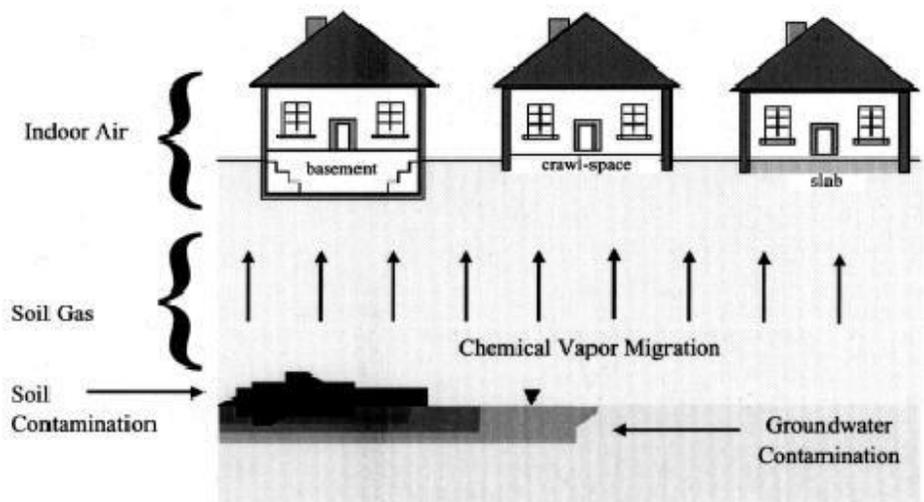
EPA toll-free:
800-621-8531, 9:30 a.m. – 5:30
p.m., weekdays

Website:
epa.gov/region5/cleanup/tuchman/

Beginning in mid-September, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will conduct an urgent cleanup action at a former dry cleaners that released dangerous chemicals into the soil and underground water supplies. EPA expects the cleanup at the former Tuchman Cleaners to cost more than \$1 million. The owner of the site is bankrupt so the EPA will pay for the cleanup. The Agency calls the cleanup a “time-critical removal action” because the pollution poses an imminent threat to the safety and health of people. EPA is conducting the cleanup using its authority under the Superfund law.¹

Besides removing contaminated soil on the now-vacant property, EPA will also be checking the neighborhood for an environmental problem called “vapor intrusion.” Vapor intrusion occurs when chemicals in the underground water or soil give off dangerous gases that can seep into buildings through foundation cracks and holes, causing unsafe indoor air pollution. Underground water supplies are called “groundwater” in environmental terms.

Soil gas, sub-slab and indoor air tests are performed to find vapor intrusion problems. In soil gas and sub-slab testing, probes are dug into the ground or under building foundations to sniff out hazardous vapors trapped between dirt particles. Air sampling measures the concentrations of hazardous gases in the indoor air.



This diagram illustrates how hazardous vapors trapped in soil and underground water supplies (groundwater) can move into homes and buildings and cause indoor air pollution. This process is called vapor intrusion. EPA will be checking for vapor intrusion during its emergency cleanup at the former Tuchman Cleaners site.

¹EPA conducts time-critical cleanups in accordance with Section 104(a)(1) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), 42 U.S.C. §9604(a)(1); and 40 C.F.R. §300.415 of the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP).

If vapor intrusion becomes a health issue inside a structure, EPA can install systems that remove the gases or pressurize crawl spaces to keep vapors from seeping in.

Tuchman Cleaners released a family of dangerous chemicals called “volatile organic compounds” or VOCs. VOCs evaporate easily and are prone to causing vapor intrusion problems. Among the hazardous pollutants released by the former dry cleaners were VOCs called “tetrachloroethene” or PCE, “trichloroethene” or TCE, “cis-1,2-Dichloroethene” or DCE and vinyl chloride. These substances were detected at concentrations that exceed health standards.

Hazardous substances from the property are present in soil, groundwater and soil vapor. Unless the cleanup occurs, people could be exposed to the pollution from breathing contaminated air through the vapor intrusion process. There is also a concern the soil and groundwater contamination is moving towards Indianapolis’ Fall Creek well field.

Site history

Tuchman Cleaners operated as a dry cleaner at 4401 N. Keystone Ave. in Indianapolis beginning in 1953 until 2008 when the parent company declared bankruptcy. Prior to the construction of the dry cleaning facility, the property was an empty lot. The site is currently vacant.

The property is located in a mixed commercial/residential area. Around 10,000 people live within one mile of the site. The city’s Fall Creek well field is less than a quarter mile from the location. Fall Creek, a major tributary to the White River, is only 500 feet south of the site.

An environmental contractor hired by the site owner did conduct some cleanup work from 2003 to 2006, but the Tuchman property remained contaminated. The city of Indianapolis oversaw demolition of the Tuchman building, and Indiana Department of Environmental Management asked for EPA help to finish the cleanup.

Tuchman Cleaners is located in a low-income neighborhood of Indianapolis and qualifies as an Environmental Justice project. Environmental Justice involves the fair treatment of all people affected by pollution and environmental laws.

Cleanup plan

Actual cleanup work and the vapor intrusion investigation will take 145 days. EPA plans the following cleanup steps:

- Develop and implement a site health, safety and security plan for the benefit of both workers and nearby residents.
- Remove contaminated soil to a depth of 2 feet.
- Arrange for off-site disposal of up to 1,500 cubic yards of contaminated soil at a licensed facility.
- Backfill excavated areas with clean fill.
- Conduct vapor intrusion assessments at up to 200 residences and a daycare.
- If and when excessive indoor pollution levels are discovered, take steps to alleviate the situation and protect the health of residents.

EPA will continue to assess site conditions and may propose future cleanup actions after the latest work is complete.