

Frequently Asked Questions

Park Laundry Cleanup Site

January 2012

Park Laundry Investigation Continues

In 2009, the Department of Ecology (Ecology) entered into a legal agreement with the property owner, Union Ridge Investment Co. (Union Ridge). The agreement, known as an Agreed Order, requires Union Ridge to investigate contamination at the Park Laundry site. The Park Laundry property, at 122 N. Main Ave. in Ridgefield, was used as a laundry and suspected dry cleaners from about 1965 - 1977. During that time, chemicals used in dry cleaning were released to the environment.

Contamination: Two volatile solvents (chemicals that evaporate easily) have been found above state cleanup levels in soil, soil gas (air found in the space between soil particles), and groundwater. The chemicals, tetrachloroethylene (PCE) and trichloroethylene (TCE), are mainly on the property and to the northwest.

After reviewing recent soil gas and groundwater data, Ecology has determined that more investigation is needed to find the full extent of contamination. Ecology will then decide what cleanup actions should be taken.

Indoor Air: Ecology is working with the Washington Department of Health (DOH) to determine if the contamination presents an indoor air health threat. Soil gas can sometimes enter buildings, bringing in contaminants like PCE and TCE. Ecology will continue to keep the community informed as this investigation moves forward.

The purpose of this FAQ is to provide background on the investigation and describe next steps. If you need more information, please contact a staff member listed in the box on the right.

Q: Why is Ecology concerned about this contamination?

A: Ecology is concerned about any contamination that might impact human health and the environment. At the Park Laundry site, PCE and TCE pose a potential threat to indoor air through **vapor intrusion**.

Vapor intrusion is when volatile chemicals, like PCE and TCE, move from soil and groundwater into air in buildings (see page 3). Union Ridge is doing a vapor intrusion investigation to see if there are health risks to people using buildings near the property.

Q: What are the goals of the investigation?

A: The goals of the investigation are to:

- Find the full extent of soil and groundwater contamination on and near the Park Laundry property.
- Assess the potential for vapor intrusion at buildings that lie above or close to the plume of contamination.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Site Investigation

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Site Document Locations

Ridgefield Library

210 N. Main Ave.
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(360) 887-8281

WA Department of Ecology

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Ecology's Website

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=4099>

Facility Site ID# 8100630

- Ensure that human health and the environment are protected.
- Determine an appropriate cleanup strategy.

Q: What testing is being done?

A: Union Ridge is continuing to test groundwater to find the full extent of contamination. They are taking more groundwater samples north and west of the property. Ecology will determine if more buildings need to be surveyed or tested based on the results of these investigations.

Ecology is contacting owners and property managers of buildings close to or above known contamination to learn about their building conditions. Property owners and managers are being asked to fill out a building survey. The survey includes questions about building occupants, condition of the foundation, and chemical use in the building. Ecology and DOH will use the survey, soil, and groundwater data to assess the potential for vapor intrusion. Ecology may select some buildings for indoor air testing depending on the findings.

Q: How will I know if my building is going to be surveyed or tested?

A: Ecology is contacting the owners and property managers of the buildings selected for building surveys. We are surveying these buildings to find out if they are vulnerable to vapor intrusion. This does not necessarily mean that these buildings have contaminated indoor air.

At this time, there are no plans to survey buildings other than those already selected. However, we will continue to evaluate the need to survey or test more buildings. If data suggest a building or residence is vulnerable to vapor intrusion, Ecology will contact building owners and occupants to set up vapor intrusion testing. Our main concern is human health and we will take precautions to lower human exposure to contamination (see page 4).

Q: When will the building surveys and investigations occur?

A: Building surveys and groundwater investigations are happening in early 2012. If needed, vapor intrusion testing will occur in mid-2012, after Ecology and Union Ridge finalize a sampling plan.

Q: What happens during indoor air testing?

A: If indoor air testing occurs, Union Ridge would place air collection devices called Summa canisters in the buildings. Some canisters collect air from crawlspaces or below the basement floor. Others would go in living or working spaces. The devices collect air for 8 hours to simulate an average work day. If apartments or homes need sampling, air would be collected for 24 hours. After samples are collected, the canisters would be removed and sent to a laboratory to be analyzed.

Q: Are the people using the buildings over the contamination safe?

A: We don't know if people are being exposed to vapors from the contaminated groundwater and soil. Testing will determine this. However, based on our experience at other sites, we do not think this is an immediate health problem.

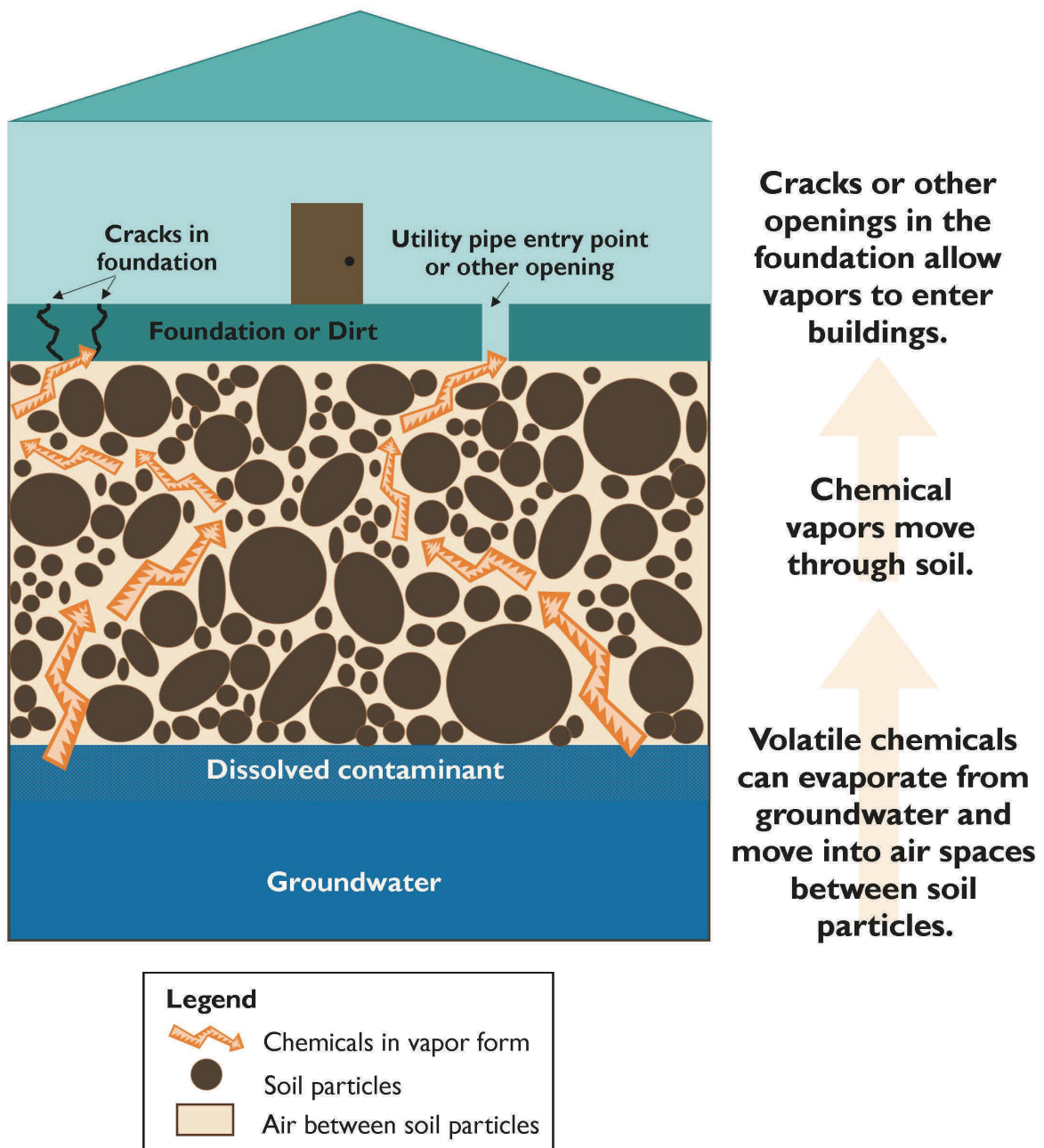
Commonly, we find that vapors don't enter buildings sitting above contaminated soil and groundwater. However, in some cases, low levels of vapors can enter buildings but the levels are so low they would not be expected to make people sick in the short term. Those low levels could, in theory, pose a small increased health risk if someone was exposed over a lifetime. It's also possible that there could be no increased health risk.

Q. What is vapor intrusion?

A. Volatile chemicals, like PCE (tetrachloroethylene) and TCE (trichloroethylene), can evaporate from soil and groundwater and move as a gas through spaces in soil. The gas can then enter buildings through cracks and other openings in the foundation. This is vapor intrusion.

Soil gas near and under buildings can be tested to see if contaminant levels are high enough to pose a risk to air in buildings. If a building is vulnerable to vapor intrusion, indoor air can be tested to see if soil gas has entered the building. You can find fact sheets about vapor intrusion and indoor air on Ecology’s website (see box on page 1).

Figure 1: Vapor Intrusion



Q: What will happen if air contamination is found in a home or business?

A: If the contaminants found in soil and groundwater are found in indoor air, the chemical levels will be compared to outdoor air levels. Outdoor air, particularly in cities and towns, often contains low levels of volatile chemicals associated with everyday activities. These outdoor air levels can affect indoor air quality.

If indoor and outdoor air levels are the same or similar, the chemicals are likely unrelated to the soil and groundwater contamination. If chemicals are found above outdoor air levels, we will see if there is an indoor air source like solvents or paints. If there are none, the contaminated soil and groundwater are the likely source. In that case, we will determine the health risk associated with the chemical levels and decide if steps need to be taken to reduce or eliminate the chemicals from indoor air.

Several methods could be used to reduce or eliminate vapor intrusion. One method is to seal up crawl-spaces, basements or any cracks found in the building's foundation. Another option is installing a system that removes the vapors from below the building.

Q: What can I do, in general, to improve the quality of my indoor air?

A: Make sure that indoor sources of volatile chemicals like paints, solvents, glues, cleaners and other chemical products are stored in sealed containers. The best place to store these sealed containers is outside in a shed or other unoccupied building. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has publications to help businesses and residents improve their indoor air quality. They can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/pubs/index.html>.

Q: Who is going to clean this up?

A: Under state cleanup law, current and past property owners and operators may be responsible for cleaning up contamination on their property and other properties impacted by the contamination. Union Ridge is the potentially liable person for this site. Union Ridge purchased the property in 1979 and is the current property owner. In 2009, Ecology entered into a legal agreement with Union Ridge to investigate contamination on and around the Park Laundry property.

Union Ridge has been completing the investigation under Ecology oversight. This will involve more groundwater and soil gas sampling. Ecology may require indoor air sampling in some buildings. Once the full extent of contamination is known, Ecology will determine the best way to clean up the contamination.

Q: Is drinking water safe?

A: The City of Ridgefield's drinking water comes from wells in Abrams Park, outside the area of contamination from the Park Laundry site. These wells pump water from an aquifer 130 - 170 feet below the ground surface. Contaminated groundwater from Park Laundry flows generally northwest, away from the city's wells. The contamination also does not appear to reach the deep drinking water aquifer.

Based on results to date, the city's water meets all state and federal requirements for safety and quality. Tests in 2010 did not detect volatile organic compounds at the well source. To learn more, please visit <http://www.ci.ridgefield.wa.us> or call (360) 887-8251.

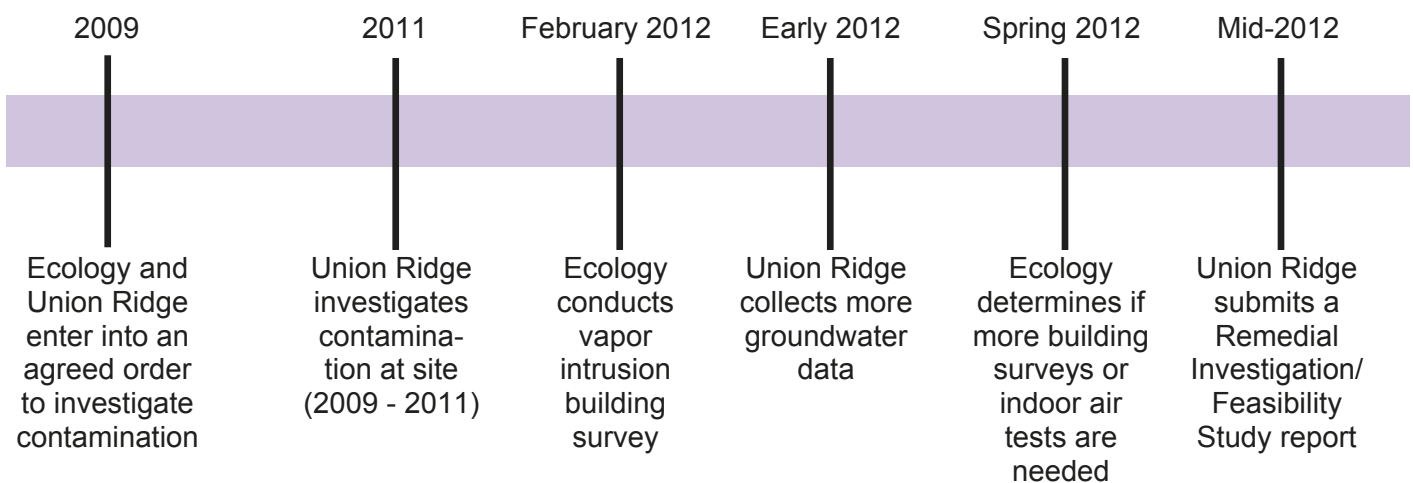
There are no private water supply wells on the Park Laundry property and none have been identified on nearby properties. Thus, contamination does not appear to pose a risk to private water wells.

Q: What happens next in the investigation?

A: The next steps in this investigation include:

- Assessing the potential for vapor intrusion at buildings above or near contaminated soil and groundwater.
- If warranted, conducting indoor air testing at buildings that may be at some risk for vapor intrusion.
- Collecting groundwater data from nearby properties.
- Evaluating cleanup options.
- Developing a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study report summarizing site investigations and assessing cleanup alternatives and costs.
- Designing and beginning appropriate cleanup measures.
- Continuing to monitor groundwater to ensure that human health and the environment are protected.

Figure 2: Park Laundry Investigation Timeline



Q: How will the community be informed?

A: Ecology will use several methods to keep the community involved and informed as the investigation progresses. Ecology's website contains up-to-date information:

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=4099>. Ecology will also mail updates periodically and hold public meetings when it is appropriate.

Ecology will hold public comment periods for the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study reports and the draft Cleanup Action Plan when they are available. If you want to be added to the site mailing list, please send your contact information to Diana Smith (see box on page 1).

Q: Who can I contact for more information?

A: The box on page 1 has a list of staff members available to answer your questions.



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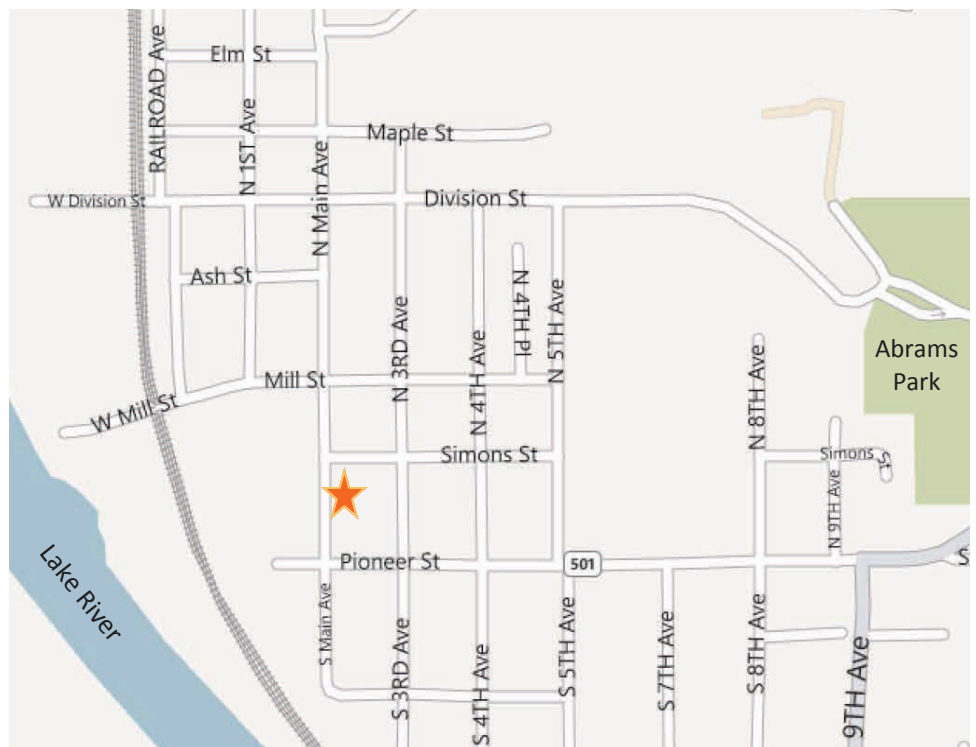
Park Laundry Clark County, WA

Update on Cleanup Site Investigation

Facility Site ID #8100630

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Park Laundry site, 122 North Main Avenue, Ridgefield