

Evaluation of Contaminants in Indoor Air and Groundwater at East High School

700 South 1600 East PCE Plume Site, Salt Lake City, Utah

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) evaluated the potential health effects of exposure to contaminants within the 700 South 1600 East tetrachloroethylene (PCE) Plume site. ATSDR's letter health consultation describes how they evaluated recent data from East High School. This fact sheet summarizes ATSDR's findings and recommendations.

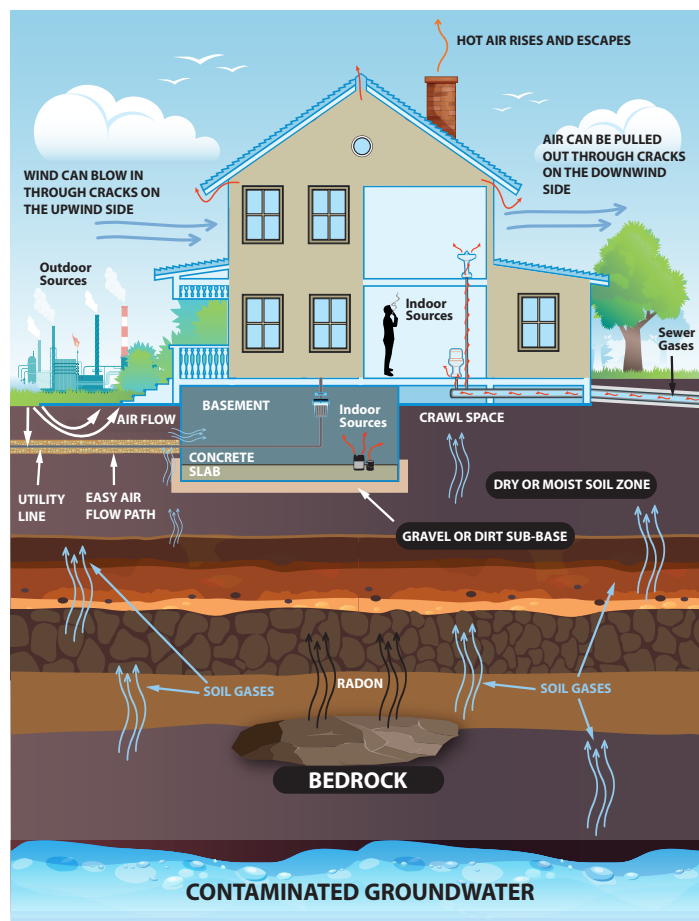
Key Findings

- Based on limited indoor air sampling from 2019, ATSDR is **unable to determine whether breathing the air inside East High School will cause harm**. To assess the potential for human risk, the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center (VAMC) should use a standard indoor air sampling method during the summer and winter.
- Groundwater data from 2021 and 2022 indicates that **PCE and related contaminant concentrations in the groundwater near the school are above levels of concern and increasing over time**. ATSDR cannot exclude the possibility of vapor intrusion occurring above a level of concern.

Site Contamination History

The VAMC in Salt Lake City operated a dry-cleaning facility on this site from about 1976 to 1984. At the time, most dry cleaners used PCE as a cleaning solvent. PCE and other volatile organic chemicals (VOCs) can enter groundwater.

When a large quantity of contaminated groundwater moves in the direction of groundwater flow, it is called a plume. When the gases evaporate from the soil or groundwater, they can enter buildings through cracks in foundations or utility lines. This is known as vapor intrusion, and it can cause people to breathe in contaminated air.



Vapor intrusion pathway. Credit: ATSDR

ATSDR's Recommendations

ATSDR recommends VAMC follow additional steps for East High School:

- Re-sample indoor air of the school using a standard time-integrated sampling method, such as an evacuated canister, to measure vapor intrusion during a typical school/workday.
- Re-sample indoor air, outdoor air, and sub-slab gas during the hottest and coldest part of the year to assess seasonal changes. Consider using indicators, tracers, and surrogates to assess if vapor intrusion is active during sampling.
- Analyze and report all contaminants of potential concern to EPA, ATSDR, and other health agencies.
- Continue to monitor the groundwater concentration and location of the PCE plume.
- Re-sample indoor air of the school if groundwater contaminant concentrations are above levels of concern within 100 feet of the school.

Next Steps for ATSDR

- ATSDR will continue, upon request, to provide technical assistance to the Department of Veterans Affairs, Utah Department of Health, and Salt Lake City officials.
- ATSDR will continue, upon request, to review data collected by environmental agencies to determine how exposures can affect people's health.
- ATSDR will provide public health education to the people potentially affected at this school.

How can I learn more?

- Read the original ATSDR public health assessment at [Evaluation of Contamination in Indoor Air, Soil, and Surface Water 700 South 1600 East PCE Plume \(cdc.gov\)](#)
- Read the full ATSDR letter health consultation at [Utah | Public Assessment & Health Consultation | ATSDR \(cdc.gov\)](#)

If you have questions or comments, call ATSDR's regional office representative, Irene Lee, at (303) 870-9890.

You can also call 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) and ask for information on the 700 South 1600 East PCE Plume site.

About ATSDR

ATSDR is a federal public health agency of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. ATSDR works with other agencies, tribal, state, and local governments to study possible health risks in communities where people could come in contact with dangerous chemicals. For more information about ATSDR, visit our website at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>.