

Environmental Fact Sheet



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 10

August 2001

Industrial Chrome Plating

Hazardous Waste Cleanup Starting Soon

In late August, cleanup crews are expected to begin removing contaminated soil from the Industrial Chrome Plating property located at 6204 NE Hassalo Street in Portland, Oregon. This time-critical removal is necessary to reduce the risk to the public and the environment from uncontrolled hazardous substances at the facility.

What is the problem?

Soil at the facility contains unacceptable levels of chromium, hexavalent chromium and lead. A number of old spills left chromium and hexavalent chromium contamination in surface soils, and chromium was detected up to 40 feet below the facility near a dry well. This well was reportedly used for disposal of chrome plating wastes during the 1960s. In the past, plating fluids were also reportedly disposed of in floor drains in the building. The highest levels of contamination on site have been found in the south and southeast portions of the property.

The biggest concern from hazardous substances at this site is chromium migrating through the soil into the groundwater and eventually to the Troutdale Aquifer, approximately 120 feet below the surface. The site is not located on a flood plain, and little groundwater is present between the surface and the aquifer. Because there is very little groundwater above the aquifer, only two groundwater samples were successfully collected. These samples showed levels of total chromium and hexavalent chromium above regulatory limits at twenty-eight feet below the surface. Samples taken from the Troutdale Aquifer do not show contamination from Industrial Chrome Plating yet. However, the geology of

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the area does not provide a barrier between the surface and the aquifer to protect the aquifer from contamination in the future.

A second concern is surface exposure to chromium and lead. Workers at the site and trespassers could breathe or swallow airborne dust. Since the Industrial Chrome Plating site is zoned for industrial use, future workers could be exposed to contaminants present in the surface soils if the site is not cleaned up.

Details about the cleanup

Later this month, Industrial Chrome Plating will cease operations and the building will be demolished. Cleanup crews will first remove

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three to five feet of soil from the most contaminated areas or "hot spots," and transport it off-site for disposal at an approved hazardous waste disposal facility. Excavated areas will then be backfilled with clean soil. Finally, a concrete or asphalt surface cap will be installed over the site to prevent rain from carrying any remaining subsurface contaminants down into the aquifer.

During the excavation, workers at the site will likely wear disposable Tyvek protective overalls to minimize direct contact with contaminated soil. Dust will be controlled to prevent contaminated dust particles from moving through the air. On-scene Coordinator Dan Heister estimates that 5,500 tons of contaminated soil and other material will be excavated and disposed of during this removal action.

Future outlook

Without the proposed cleanup action, we can not be sure the aquifer will remain free of chromium from this site, or that people coming to the site will not be exposed to contaminated soil. However, there is no immediate risk to drinking water supplies and there are no direct threats to wildlife or the food chain. The site will be monitored following this removal action to make sure long-term cleanup is not needed.

Background on the site

The Industrial Chrome Plating site occupies a small lot of approximately one-quarter acre on NE Hassalo Street near 62nd Avenue. The site is bordered to the south by the Banfield Freeway, to the north by five residences across NE Hassalo Street, and to the east and west by light industrial properties.

A chrome plating facility has operated at this location since 1937 or 1938 under several different owners. The present owners purchased the property in 1991.

How can I get more information?

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The Administrative Record for Industrial Chrome Plating will be available for review in approximately 60 days at 1200 Sixth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101. Contact Judy Smith for more information.