



# Omega Chemical Superfund Site

UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY • REGION 9 • APRIL 2002

## PROGRESS AT THE OMEGA CHEMICAL SUPERFUND SITE

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and a group of potentially responsible parties (PRPs) have been conducting an investigation of the groundwater and soil contamination at the Omega Chemical Superfund site in Whittier, CA (Figure 1). This fact sheet discusses what has been completed to date on the site investigation.

EPA is studying the nature and extent of the groundwater contamination near the site. EPA is also overseeing the PRPs as they investigate the extent and nature of soil and groundwater contamination on the Omega property. As a result of past activities at the site, soil and groundwater are contaminated with various volatile organic compounds (VOCs). VOCs are organic compounds that easily evaporate at room temperature. The most prevalent VOCs at the Omega site are perchloroethylene (PCE), trichloroethylene (TCE), Freon 11 and Freon 113. These solvents were previously used as degreasers, dry-cleaning chemicals and refrigerant agents. The nearest drinking water well to the site is approximately 1.3 miles downgradient from the site (Figure 1) in Santa Fe Springs, CA. The maximum contamination level (MCL) allowed in drinking water for PCE and TCE is five parts per billion (ppb), for Freon 11 its 150 ppb and Freon 113 its 1200 ppb. A MCL is the maximum permissible level of a contaminant in water delivered to a public drinking system. Drinking water for the City of Santa Fe Springs and the City of Whittier meets State and Federal drinking water standards.

As part of the site investigation, EPA is developing a monitoring program to track the movement of contaminated groundwater from the site. The program will help EPA monitor the flow of the contamination underground so it does not threaten drinking water sources and help to determine if other sources are contributing

to the contamination. The program helps determine what type of groundwater cleanup system will be needed.

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### WHAT HAS HAPPENED?

#### EPA Activities:

In November 2001, EPA drilled 80 borings and took a water sample at each location. The boring data results helped EPA to understand the extent of groundwater contamination better and helped to determine where monitoring wells needed to be placed. A monitoring well is used to collect periodic groundwater samples. The map on page 2 shows an outline of the site's groundwater contamination plume. The plume's border is indicated where we did not detect VOCs. In some sampling locations outside of the boring data points, VOCs were detected. In the near future, EPA will conduct more bor-

### APPROXIMATE ACTIVITY SCHEDULE FOR THE OMEGA SITE

- **February 2002:** EPA began quarterly groundwater sampling of 18 new monitoring wells.
- **Summer 2002 to Fall 2002:** PRPs will begin a soil investigation and feasibility study on the site.
- **Summer 2002:** PRPs will collect additional samples from newly installed monitoring wells.
- **Summer 2002:** PRPs will begin to design a system to extract contaminants from the groundwater in the area of the highest concentrations. This area is near Putnam Street, just south of the Omega facility.

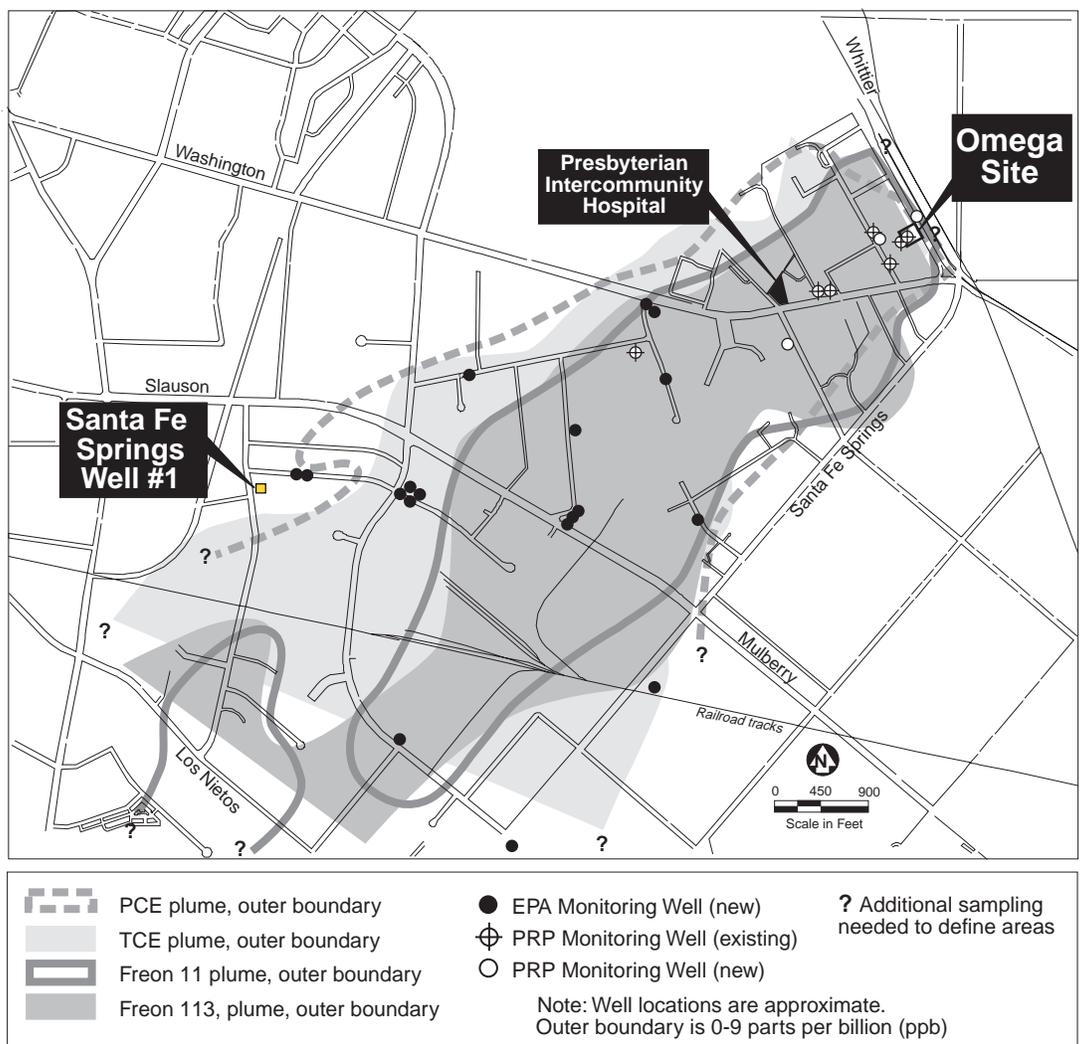
ing sampling in these areas to define better where the groundwater contamination ends. Based on the boring sampling data, EPA installed 18 groundwater monitoring wells (see Figure 1). The monitoring wells will be sampled quarterly and results come back within a four-month time period.

**PRP Activities:**

The PRPs have recently installed two additional downgradient groundwater monitoring wells and a third monitoring well has been installed upgradient from the Omega facility (see Figure 1). Four rounds of quarterly sampling have been conducted on the wells previously installed. The two most recently installed wells were sampled for the first time in late March 2002 and the results are pending.

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

A Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) is available for citizens who live near a Superfund site. The grant helps qualified citizen groups affected by a Superfund site to hire an independent technical advisor to help interpret and comment on site-related information. An initial grant of up to \$50,000 is available. For further information about the grant, please call us and request an application (toll-free 1-800-231-3075) or get it from the TAG web page: [www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

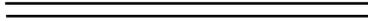


**Figure 1: Omega Chemical Superfund Site Showing Groundwater Plume Contamination and Monitoring Wells**

## SITE HISTORY

The Omega Chemical Superfund site is located at 12504 and 12512 East Whittier Blvd., in the City of Whittier, Los Angeles County, California. The site is approximately 40,000 square feet in area. There are two buildings, a warehouse and an office building. The rest of the site is a paved service yard. From 1976 to 1991, the Omega Chemical Corporation and Refrigerant Reclamation Company operated a used solvent and refrigerant recycling and reformulation treatment facility. The facility primarily handled chemicals used in refrigerator and freezer coils and chlorinated solvents that included degreasing chemicals and dry-cleaning chemicals.

In the late 1980s, the Los Angeles County Department of Health Services, Public Works Department and the Fire Department investigated Omega. Contamination was found in shallow soil at depths less than 3.5 feet below ground surface and at concentrations up to 1,000 parts per million (ppm). In 1995, the EPA issued an Unilateral Administrative Order to over 100 responsible parties to remove contaminants that posed an immediate or substantial threat to public health and environment. This included the removal of more than 2,700 drums on the site were removed. In 2001, a Consent Decree was signed with over 100 PRPs to conduct a soil remedial investigation and feasibility study at the Omega property; install three (3) downgradient monitoring wells to be sampled quarterly; and design and implement a groundwater containment and mass removal system near the Omega facility.



## SITE INFORMATION REPOSITORY

The EPA maintains site information repositories at the Whittier Public Library and at the EPA Superfund Records Center. These repositories contain project documents, fact sheets, reference materials, and in the near future the Administrative Record for the site. The Administrative Record contains documents that the EPA relies on to select the cleanup plan(s) for the site. The EPA encourages you to review these documents to gain a complete understanding of the site.

Whittier Public Library  
7344 S. Washington Avenue  
Whittier, CA 90602  
(562) 464-3450

EPA Superfund Record Center  
95 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 536-2000



# FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT.....

**Jacqueline Lane**  
Community Involvement Coordinator  
U.S. EPA Region 9, (SFD-3)  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 972-3236 or / o 1-800-231-3075

**Nancy Riveland**  
Remedial Project Manager  
U.S. EPA Region 9, (SFD-7)  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
(415) 972-3251 o 1-800-231-3075

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Attn: Jackie Lane

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