

Frequently Asked Questions about Indoor Air Testing

How is indoor air testing done?

Air samples are collected by a small 4 inch passive sampler (Figure 2) that slowly draws air over a five (5) day period. Typically, one sampler is placed in the living space at breathing level and one in the subsurface of a home if it has a crawl space. EPA will return in 5 days, at a mutually agreed upon time, to pick up the sampler and send it for laboratory analysis. The air testing results collected will be sent to you after they have been verified, approximately 6 weeks after sampling. EPA will assess the PCE and TCE concentrations (and other related volatile chemicals) inside residences by comparing the sample results with outdoor air results and compare those to EPA's established health-protective residential indoor air levels.



Figure 2: Passive Radiello sampler

Who pays for the testing?

EPA is paying for the costs of the sampling in the area.

What if there is a Vapor Intrusion Problem?

If indoor air sampling results from vapor intrusion exceed safe levels, EPA will work with the homeowner/resident to lower the indoor air levels and to prevent the contamination from accumulating in the residence. EPA may recommend the installation of a vapor intrusion control system to reduce indoor air levels.

With the consent of the homeowner, this would generally include sealing any potential conduits and the installation of a sub-slab or sub-membrane vapor intrusion control system. There is no cost to the homeowner for the vapor intrusion control system selected to mitigate the home. Note that EPA is not requiring residential owners to complete these response actions themselves.

Contacting EPA – For More Information

EPA is committed to meaningful public involvement and keeping residents, owners, and community members informed and updated about the ongoing soil, groundwater and vapor intrusion work. EPA will provide periodic updates as we obtain more information during the groundwater and air investigation in the neighborhood. EPA is also available to meet with residents/owners to answer any questions you may have.

Please contact the following EPA staff

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See also EPA's websites for more information on the Omega Chemical Corporation Superfund Site at web page: www.epa.gov/region09/OmegaChemical



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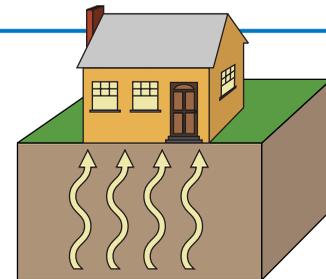
Omega Chemical Corporation Superfund Site

March 2013

Public Outreach to Select Homeowners in Whittier, CA

Residential area near Washington and Putnam Street

When high concentrations of volatile contaminants are spilled in an area, they have the capacity to turn into gas or vapor and travel through the soil as it spreads out and away from its main source. The impact can become less as it moves farther away from the main source. In the case of the Omega property, mismanaged solvents resulted in gas or vapors in shallow soils near the former Omega Chemical Corporation facility located at 12504 Whittier Boulevard.



In 2013, four (4) soil gas samples were collected at Vapor Monitoring Points (VMPs) in your neighborhood as part of the assessment of the extent of the contamination (Site Map, Figure 1). The soil gas sample results indicate levels of the chemicals tetrachloroethylene (PCE) and trichloroethene (TCE), that have the potential to migrate through subsurface soil into overlying buildings by a process called vapor intrusion.

It is important to know that the shallow contaminated groundwater in the area is not used as a drinking water source or for any other household uses. That household water comes from a separate drinking water source or aquifer. Your drinking water meets all drinking water standards.

What is EPA Doing?

EPA is assessing the vapor intrusion pathway in your neighborhood and we are seeking cooperation to sample the indoor air in the homes in the immediate vicinity where PCE and TCE vapors were found at elevated levels in shallow soil (see Figure 1). The purpose of the testing is to ensure there are no potential long-term health concerns (e.g., potential exposure to low levels of TCE and PCE in indoor air over a long-period of time – 30 years). EPA is contacting homeowners in your neighborhood for permission to sample residences to assess whether there have been any impacts to the quality of the air in the homes in this area. If you have questions, or would like to have your home tested, please contact EPA. (See EPA contact information on back). EPA plans to begin air sampling in mid-March 2013 and will conduct additional analysis if the levels of the initial study indicate vapor intrusion is occurring in this area.

In addition, you may notice some drilling activity in your neighborhood. This is to install additional Vapor Monitoring Points (VMPs) to further assess the extent of the contamination in the soil. This work will continue in 2013.

What are the Next Steps?

Based on the residential air testing results, EPA will determine the appropriate next steps and update the residents and community. Due to privacy concerns, EPA will not publicly disclose the individual home indoor air results with the general public. However, the indoor air results for each home will be shared with each individual homeowner and resident and only a summary of the data will be made publicly available.

EPA is working to install a full scale soil vapor extraction (SVE) system to remove the chemical vapors that are in the soil below the ground surface. A series of SVE wells will be located on the former Omega property and adjacent properties. The SVE wells work as a system to remove the chemical vapors that are in the soil. Equipment attached to the wells creates a vacuum which pulls air (and vapors) through the soil, out of the soil, and into a granular activated carbon (GAC) system for treatment. The system is being designed now and we anticipate construction will begin later this year.

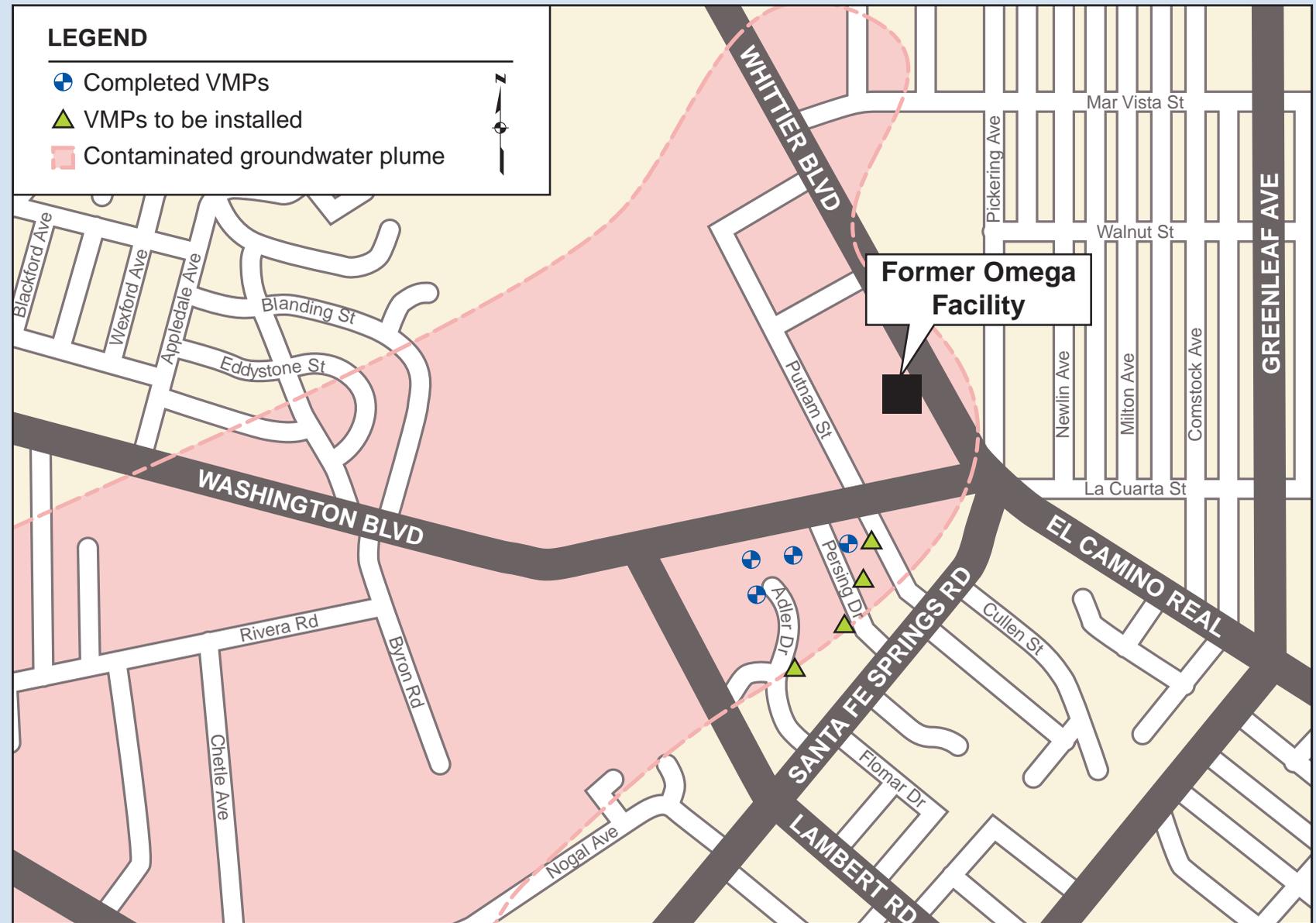


Figure 1: Map of Residential Neighborhood near the Omega Chemical Corporation Superfund Site