

Vapor Intrusion Investigation – Information Sheet for Neighbors

Environmental cleanup activities in your area

An environmental investigation is underway in your neighborhood. Environmental investigations involve many different people, and it can be confusing to know who is doing what and why. **The back of this letter includes general information about this project as well as key parties and their contact information.** Please feel free to get in touch with these people to ask questions.

Migrating soil gas contamination

When environmental contamination migrates through soil, groundwater, or utility trenches, away from the property it started on, it can affect nearby properties. **The party responsible for the source of the contamination is required by state law to investigate and clean up hazardous substances in the environment.** They are also responsible for reducing potentially harmful health effects of the contamination at affected properties.

One possible harmful effect occurs when gases (vapors) from underground contamination migrate upward into the indoor air of houses and buildings. **Gases in soil can get into buildings through tiny cracks in a foundation or basement wall, utility service lines, sump pumps, etc. This is often referred to as vapor intrusion, and it is similar to how naturally occurring radon gas gets into houses and buildings.**

Testing to see if vapor intrusion exists at certain houses and buildings is a standard part of most environmental investigations. Allowing environmental professionals to sample air inside and underneath your house or building will let you know if there are any harmful vapors in the soil gas that could affect your indoor air quality and your health. **These samples will be sent to a Wisconsin-certified laboratory for analysis to determine if any follow-up action is necessary.**

If there is a soil gas problem at your house or building, the responsible party is required to fix the problem. Often this means that the responsible party will hire contractors and obtain your permission to install a vapor mitigation system on your home or building to prevent soil gases from getting indoors. These are similar to radon mitigation systems found in many homes, but even houses with radon systems should still be tested during the environmental investigation.

Permission may be requested to access your property

Environmental contamination often migrates, and it does not stop at property boundaries. **The party responsible for the contamination is required by state law to seek permission to access other properties to investigate how far contamination has migrated.**

If access is needed to your property, the responsible party or environmental professional should provide you a written property access agreement to sign. **DNR recommends that you grant permission and allow qualified environmental professionals working for the responsible party to sample and test the air inside and underneath your house or building.**

We recognize that you may still have questions or concerns. **Please contact the environmental consultant or DNR project manager listed on the back with your questions and requests for additional information.**

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DATE _____

SITE NAME & ADDRESS _____

DNR ACTIVITY (BRRTS) NUMBER _____

For more information about this investigation and cleanup project go to dnr.wi.gov and search for “cleanup database” or “RR sites map”

BRRTS on the Web is the DNR’s database of contaminated sites
Enter the activity number or the site address

RR Sites Map is the DNR’s interactive map of contaminated sites
Enter site address, or zoom in to your neighborhood to find the site

PEOPLE TO CONTACT WITH YOUR QUESTIONS

ROLE	WHAT THEY DO	CONTACT PERSON & COMPANY	PHONE & EMAIL (if available for contact)
Responsible Party	Person or entity responsible for investigating and cleaning up the contamination		
Environmental Consultant	Technical expert hired by Responsible Party or DNR to conduct the investigation and cleanup work		
DNR Project Manager	Regulator and contact person for questions on environmental cleanup status and overall process		
Dept. of Health Services	Contact person for questions on health risks associated with exposure to chemical vapors		
WHO HIRED THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT? <input type="checkbox"/> Responsible Party <input type="checkbox"/> DNR <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____			

Additional resources on vapor intrusion

For more information on vapor intrusion go to dnr.wi.gov and search for “vapor intrusion”

To view a short video about vapor intrusion go to dnr.wi.gov and search for “vapor intrusion 101”

Checked boxes indicate DNR and DHS fact sheets are enclosed

- What is vapor intrusion?
 Why test for vapor intrusion?
 Who should I contact about vapor intrusion investigations?
 What to expect during vapor intrusion sampling
 Environmental contamination and your real estate
 WI Dept. of Health Services handouts