

Frequently Asked Questions Regarding the CTS Site

The North Carolina Division of Waste Management (DWM) includes the Inactive Hazardous Sites Branch (IHSB), which is responsible for overseeing assessment and remedial actions at sites contaminated with hazardous substances. The IHSB has cataloged approximately 3000 sites, with more being discovered every month. Due to the number of sites across North Carolina that fall under the jurisdiction of the IHSB, sites are prioritized so that the DWM's limited resources can be applied more efficiently to those sites with higher risk factors. The DWM also works alongside the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) to obtain additional Federal resources to mitigate risk factors at high priority sites. Both the USEPA and the DWM have been addressing the risk factors at the CTS site.

Purpose of meeting / Why are we here?

The DWM is conducting an availability session to answer any questions about the progress of the Phase I groundwater assessment at the CTS site.

When will the groundwater assessment begin?

Part of the process preceding the actual, physical work on the site includes preparing a work plan. A work plan is required so that the DWM can insure that the assessment efforts will produce sufficient information for the responsible party (CTS) to develop an effective "corrective strategy" (the remedial action plan). The work plan for the CTS site was submitted by MacTec Engineering on behalf of CTS in March 2008. DWM reviewed the March 2008 work plan and required a revised work plan in April 2008. CTS revised the work plan to address the revisions requested by the DWM. Implementation of the work plan will begin in the July-August 2008 time frame.

Where will the Phase I assessment monitoring wells be located?

The Phase I assessment focuses on defining the magnitude and extent of contamination at the area closest to, and immediately surrounding, the CTS facility source areas. Based on the results of the Phase I assessment, immediate subsequent investigation phases will move off site where necessary to define the horizontal and vertical extent of the contamination. The Phase I assessment will help define the directions in which additional assessment should occur.

Will the assessment include the Jean Drive area?

The Phase I assessment will involve gathering information regarding the contamination in the source area on the CTS plant property. Additional investigations will be performed off site as the extent of the contamination plume is defined. If the extent of CTS's contamination appears to extend to Jean Drive, then CTS's assessment will include that area.

How long will it take to clean up this site?

Sites similar to the CTS facility usually require multiple assessment phases and thus can take more than a year to fully assess. The assessment will determine the amount of contamination as well as its vertical and horizontal extent and how the local geology has affected its migration. After the assessment has gathered this critical information, planning of an effective "corrective strategy" (the remedial action plan) can be initiated. Once implemented, typical remediation efforts at other facilities like the CTS site have taken decades before the groundwater is fully returned to pre-contamination conditions. In many cases, TCE contaminants can never be completely removed from a site even with the use of the best available remediation technologies.

Are there plans to remove the building at the CTS site?

Although soil contamination assessment has previously been performed at the site, the distribution of groundwater contamination and raw contaminant product has not been fully investigated. The Phase I assessment will gather the information needed to understand the distribution of contaminants at the site around the source area. Destroying the building and excavating soils would erase evidence of possible source areas within the building. In the future, the building may need to be removed to conduct remediation in that area.

What happens if my water is contaminated?

The USEPA's Emergency Response and Removal Branch has been handling contaminated drinking water well issues. An agreement between the City of Asheville and Buncombe County authorizes the extension of a new water line to "The Oaks" subdivision. CTS is ultimately responsible for the costs of connecting all residences to public water if they were impacted by the CTS contamination. The groundwater assessment, when completed, will determine which areas are affected by the CTS release.

Does the State or County sample and/or pay for analysis of my well at regular, unsolicited, intervals?

The state and/or county environmental agencies are not funded to conduct general periodic testing of private water wells. Once contamination has been discovered in an area, the state will determine which wells are at risk and at what intervals those wells will be sampled. The state may require the responsible party to conduct the drinking water well testing.

How do I know my well is safe and who will sample my well?

Drinking water wells are considered the private property of the land owner. Approximately 50% of North Carolina's population of 8 million people obtain their drinking water from groundwater sources. The state does not have the funding to sample every private drinking water well within North Carolina. Sampling of a private drinking water well is the responsibility of the land owner. The interval at which a land owner's well should be sampled should reflect the land owner's level of confidence in the well's water quality and the amount that the land owner is willing to spend for analytical costs.

When the IHSB identifies a groundwater contamination site as a priority and finds that there are supply wells at risk, the IHSB will have those wells tested. Otherwise, the well owner can request that the local Health Department sample the well. The local Health Department's sampling commitments will be determined by their available resources and policies, which vary from county to county.