



Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
Division of Spill Prevention and Response
Contaminated Sites Program

Gaffney Road Area-Wide Investigation Fact Sheet

August 1999

This fact sheet announces new investigations to identify the source(s) and extent of groundwater contamination in the Gaffney Road area. Groundwater investigations in the Gaffney Road area began with Phase I in 1997 and Phase II in 1998 within public right-of-ways. Groundwater contamination is from tetrachloroethylene (PCE), a chlorinated solvent, and three of its associated breakdown compounds. PCE is highly toxic and a suspected carcinogen.

Phase III Investigations

In August 1999 the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation (ADEC) will begin Phase III of its investigation into the source of groundwater contamination in the Gaffney Road area. Phase III will focus on identifying possible source(s) and extent of contamination along Gaffney Road between Noble and Turner Streets. (See map) This phase looks at private properties, rather than the public right-of-ways as in earlier investigations. The studies also will identify whether there are potential threats to public health in the area. ADEC will conduct a survey of property owners and residents to determine if any private wells are still in use. Field investigations include sanitary sewer sampling, site inspections of some properties, soil gas sampling, private well sampling, and soil and groundwater sampling from monitoring wells. Samples will be analyzed for PCE and its degradation compounds. Field investigations will continue through September 1999.

Phase I and II Efforts - Public Right-of-Ways

During the Phase I investigation, ADEC found solvent contamination under Gaffney Road and extending northwest to 11th Avenue. During the Phase II sampling, ADEC drilled 22 additional monitoring wells in the downtown Fairbanks area to better define the extent of groundwater contamination. Results of the investigation showed that groundwater contamination from PCE and its breakdown compounds appeared to originate in the Gaffney Road area. The investigation also showed two plumes (areas of contamination) that currently do not extend beyond Kellum Street and 12th Avenue, respectively. The highest concentrations of PCE, found within the immediate vicinity of Gaffney Road, were significantly above the maximum allowable amount of PCE for drinking water.

City Drinking Water Wells Not Affected

Golden Heart Utilities (GHU) routinely samples its wells. Continued analysis of the GHU wells show that these drinking water wells are safe and have not been affected by the PCE contamination.

Next Steps

Following completion of the Phase III field investigations and sample analyses, ADEC will host a community informational meeting to present the results and to discuss any possible future actions. This meeting is expected to take place in late January 2000. At that time, copies of the final Gaffney Road Area-Wide Phase III Groundwater Investigation Report will be available at the meeting and at the ADEC Fairbanks office.

For information or questions regarding this groundwater investigation, please contact:

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