



SARATOGA
California

City of Saratoga
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Quito Village Shopping Center Soil Vapor Contamination

Environmental investigations at Quito Village Shopping Center have identified elevated levels of tetrachloroethene (PCE), benzene, and ethylbenzene in soil vapor (the air space between the individual soil grains) beneath the shopping center. The contamination can be attributed to past operations of the former Quito Dry Cleaners and a former gas station. Although the contamination is associated with past operators, the current site owner has requested oversight from the County of Santa Clara Department of Environmental Health (DEH). The current site owner's environmental consultant will collect additional samples to evaluate the extent of on-site and off-site contamination and other relevant site conditions. Based on the results, the next steps will be identified. It is likely that cleanup and mitigation will be required along with long-term monitoring. Work will be performed by the current site owner's environmental consultant and regulated by the DEH. The City of Saratoga has no authority over the site assessment and remediation; however, given community concern about the topic, the City has prepared this courtesy notice in cooperation with the DEH to describe the current status and likely next steps.

Sampling & Remediation/Cleanup Plan Overview

In late 2020, the current site owner, Sand Hill Property Company, applied to DEH to request regulatory oversight after contamination was discovered. They subsequently developed a draft work plan to address the contamination. DEH is currently working with the current site owner to determine the extent of contamination. To do this, soil vapor samples will be taken from nearby streets (see below) to identify the extent of contamination.

If off-site sampling reveals soil vapor contamination that is a potential risk to human health, DEH will require evaluation of the sub-slab or crawl space air of residential properties in the affected area. Based on the results, DEH may require indoor air sampling of potentially impacted residential properties. Once the extent of contamination is determined, the remediation plan will be refined and finalized. While the specific strategies that will be utilized have not yet been finalized, common strategies for cleanup of contaminated soil vapors include excavation and removal of contaminated soil, soil vapor extraction that creates a negative pressure to pull contaminated soil vapors from soils, and bioventing to degrade chemicals through passive venting techniques. DEH will issue a notice to owners of parcels within the affected area and initiate a public comment period at least 30 days before the final remediation plan is approved.

The amount of time needed to complete sampling and prepare a final remediation plan varies. In some cases, remediation may require several years to complete. Before the additional sampling is complete, interim remediation or mitigation may begin in contaminated areas that have already been defined.

Next Steps

The next step is to define the boundaries of soil vapor contamination by collecting soil vapor samples surrounding the Quito Village Shopping Center. Residents near the property can expect to see drilling and sampling within the next few months. A map of sampling locations and a list of streets where sampling will occur are shown below. As the project moves forward, the environmental consultant may request access to individual properties to conduct additional sampling. Please cooperate with the environmental consultant performing the sampling activities.

Initial Offsite Soil Vapor Sampling Locations



- Devon Avenue
- McFarland Avenue
- Paseo Lado
- Paseo Presada

Tetrachloroethene (PCE)

Many dry cleaners use tetrachloroethene (PCE) to clean clothes. Use of PCE will be phased out under California law by 2023. This chemical can also be found in some household products, like stain removers or adhesives. At elevated levels, PCE may cause cancer and can be harmful to reproductive health. If you are concerned that potential PCE exposure has caused you to experience negative health effects, discuss these concerns with your doctor.

Benzene and Ethylbenzene

Benzene and ethylbenzene are commonly found in products like gasoline and tobacco smoke and are used to make plastics and other products. At elevated levels, benzene and ethylbenzene may cause cancer. If you are concerned that potential benzene or ethylbenzene exposure has caused you to experience negative health effects, discuss these concerns with your doctor.

Additional Information & Email Notifications

For more information or to sign up for email notifications about the Quito Village Development Project and ongoing environmental investigations, please visit www.saratoga.ca.us/QuitoVillage.