

Public Notice

In accordance with the requirements of the Groundwater Protection Act, notification is hereby provided to the owners and users of private, semi-private, and non-community water systems in or near Morrison of the volatile organic compounds, trichloroethylene (TCE), exceeding the maximum contaminant level and low levels of perchloroethylene (PCE), and trans-1,2-dichloroethylene, and of the need to test their systems for potential contamination. According to the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency, the area potentially affected by contamination is located within the Morrison city limits, extending to one half mile west, south and east of the city limits. For a listing of laboratories certified to analyze drinking water for volatile organic compounds, interpretation of any test results, contaminant health effects information, and recommendations for individuals who regularly consume well water, contact the environmental health staff at the Whiteside County health department at 815 772 7411 ext. 23 or the environmental Engineering staff at the Illinois Dept. of Public Health, rockford office at 815 987 7511 or visit -or- visit our web site at www.whiteside.org.

Frequently Asked Questions

When was the contamination discovered in the city's wells?

In December of 1986 the II EPA sampled 3 of the 4 community wells, serving Morrison, as part of a Statewide Groundwater Monitoring Network. At that time wells #1 and #3 were found to contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs); Trichloroethylene (TCE), perchloroethylene (PCE) and 1,2-dichloroethylene. Well #4, located on the north side of town, was also tested and was found to have no detectable levels of VOCs. The levels of TCE, found in wells #1 and #3 were in excess of the established maximum contaminant level of 5 parts per billion in water.

Where are wells #1 and #3 located?

Wells #1 and #3 are located at Water Works Park near the intersection of Winfield and Heaton Streets.

What has been done to address the contamination?

Shortly after the contamination was discovered, wells #1 and #3 were taken out of service and repairs to well #2 were cancelled. The city at that time was supplied only by well #4. In 1988, an air stripper was installed to remove the contamination from the water produced by well #3 and in 1989 wells #1 and #2 were properly abandoned.

Is the city's water safe to drink?

Analysis of all water samples, treated by the air stripper, have found no detectable levels of the three contaminants. Only treated water is distributed to the public.

Why are we giving notice now?

On July 11, 2002, the Illinois General Assembly passed a law requiring that any time a volatile organic compound is found in a public water supply, in excess of the maximum contaminant level, the Illinois Department of Public Health or delegated county department must notify the public, specifically owners and users of private, semi-private and non-community wells,

identifying the contaminants.

What are these contaminants?

The main chemical of interest is trichloroethylene (TCE), though perchloroethylene (PCE) and trans-1,2-dichloroethylene (DCE) were also detected at low levels. TCE is mainly used as a solvent to remove grease from metal parts.

What are the potential Health risks associated with exposure to these contaminants?

TCE, PCE and 1,2-DCE are all chlorinated solvents and may cause similar health effects. Any adverse health effects would depend on the level of chemicals in the water and how the water is used each day. In general, long-term exposure to these chemicals in water may affect the liver and kidneys.

Studies of persons exposed to TCE suggest other effects such as blood disorders, diabetes, and birth defects. TCE is considered a probable human carcinogen because animal studies have suggested it causes liver cancer, but studies in humans are not conclusive.

Does exposure to these contaminants cause multiple sclerosis?

No conclusive link exists between the chlorinated solvents detected and multiple sclerosis. Research on the relationship between environmental chemicals and autoimmune diseases like multiple sclerosis continues.

Where is the contamination suspected to be?

The contaminants still persist in the groundwater pumped from well#3. According to the IEPA groundwater is suspected to be moving very slowly in a south southwest direction.

Are private water supplies at risk?

Any water well located in the path of contamination could be at risk. However, looking at the location of well #3 and factoring in the suspected directional flow of groundwater it appears that very few, if any, private wells are located in the path of the contamination.

What should I do if I Have a well that I no longer use?

Wells that are no longer used, or otherwise abandoned, (capped or uncapped) provide a potential route for contamination to enter the groundwater supply. For this reason Illinois law requires that all abandoned wells be properly sealed.

Does the state provide testing?

The Il Department of Public Health Laboratories are no longer accredited to test for volatile organic compounds and, consequently, can not provide testing.

How can I get my water tested?

Listed below are water test labs certified to test for volatile organic compounds:

awwsc, Inc. - belleville laboratory
huron valley laboratories, inc.

(618) 239-0516

(734) 946-4990

ct&e environmental services inc.-mi
(231) 843-1877

pdc laboratories, inc
(309) 692-9688

environmental health laboratories stl buffalo
(219) 233-4777

(716) 691-2600

Environmental monitoring and
technologies, Inc.
(847) 967-6666

stl chicago
(708) 534-5200

Environmetrics
(314) 432-0550

Suburban laboratories, inc.
(708) 544-3260

Gabriel laboratories, ltd.
(773) 486-2123

Testamerica nashville division
(615) 726-0177

heritage environmental
services, llc
(317) 390-3182

Us biosystems, inc.
(561) 447-7373

What do I do if contamination is found in my well?

If an analysis finds any volatile organic compounds in your well water you can contact either the Whiteside County Health Department (772-7411 ext. 23) or the Illinois Department of Public Health (815-987-7511) for recommendations.