



**ATSDR**  
AGENCY FOR TOXIC SUBSTANCES  
AND DISEASE REGISTRY

This update is to inform residents of Chillum and surrounding communities about the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry's (ATSDR) public health activities related to the Chillum Perc site (the site). At this site, a combination of tetrachloroethylene (also referred to as perc, perchloroethylene, and PCE ) and gasoline-related chemicals have contaminated groundwater in Maryland. This contaminated groundwater has migrated under the Lamond-Riggs Park community in Washington, D.C. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) asked ATSDR to provide public health recommendations about the community's potential exposure to the tetrachloroethylene contamination. In addition, ATSDR received a petition from a citizen concerned about a possible health effects from the gasoline spill. ATSDR developed two health consultation documents to address the public health concerns about exposure to both of the sources of contamination at this site. This newsletter provides a summary of ATSDR's findings as reported in these two documents.

June 2005



# Chillum Perc Site

## Chillum, Maryland

### Community Newsletter Vol. 2

## What is a health consultation?

An ATSDR health consultation is an evaluation of environmental data and information to respond to a specific public health question. A health consultation evaluates information on human exposures to toxic materials, and provides advice on a specific public health issue. If warranted, a health consultation may provide recommendations for actions to protect the public's health.

## What information did ATSDR consider for the Chillum health consultations?

ATSDR reviewed environmental data and reports from the community about how the site affects their health and quality of life. ATSDR evaluated environmental sampling data for soil, soil vapor, groundwater, drinking

water, and indoor air from the site from EPA's Superfund program, the community's contractor, Chevron's contractor, and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers. ATSDR also reviewed records about the site investigation and clean up activities. In December 2003, ATSDR mailed a newsletter to the community residents to inform them about ATSDR's public health activities related to the site. A health-concerns sheet was included in the newsletter for residents to use to report their health concerns to ATSDR. ATSDR included the concerns raised by the community as part of the health consultation process. The following is a summary of the community concerns submitted to ATSDR for this site:

- The short-term and long-term health effects of people, including young children and senior citizens, exposed to the gasoline plume (benzene, methyl tert-butyl ether [MTBE]);
- The combined health effects of exposure to gasoline and other chemicals (e.g., the gasoline plume, diesel fumes from vehicles, and fumes from fueling at the gas pump);

- The potential for contaminated groundwater impacting drinking water (e.g., the integrity of the water lines in the area for possible infiltration of contaminants into drinking water); and
- The concerns about the environmental sampling data (e.g., drought period soil vapor sampling and lack of samples from Oglethorpe and Nicholson Streets).

In February 2004, ATSDR participated in a community meeting to present an update on our public health activities and to share feedback received from the community members in response to the initial newsletter and from the self-reported health concerns sheets.

## What are ATSDR's health findings about the Chillum Perc site?

The results of ATSDR's evaluation are described in two health consultation documents dated January 2004 and November 2004. The health consultations included evaluations of PCE, benzene, MTBE, and other contaminants that were found during sampling. A brief overview of ATSDR's findings is provided below.

### Soil Gas Data Review for the Chillum Perc Site (January 2004)

- ATSDR, on the basis of the limited soil gas data available at that time, concluded that residents might have been exposed to PCE and other toxic compounds from the site.
- ATSDR recommended collecting additional indoor air samples to verify if site-related indoor air contamination was present in residents' homes.

### Environmental Data Evaluation for Chillum Perc Site (November 2004)

- EPA's Region III had additional indoor air, soil vapor, drinking water, and groundwater samples collected around the site from July to September 2003. EPA asked ATSDR to review the sampling results and to provide recommendations based on the new data.
- ATSDR evaluated the new sampling data and concluded the following:

All indoor air volatile organic compounds (VOCs) concentrations detected at the site are at levels that are unlikely to make people sick.

The limited available data indicated soil vapor intrusion is not occurring, or occurring at an insignificant rate that would not make people sick.

No site-related contaminants were detected in residential drinking water samples. All detected VOCs in drinking water are trihalomethanes (THMs), which are by-products of chlorine disinfection of water. Exposure to THM levels found at the site is not expected to cause illness in the community.

In summary, ATSDR concluded that although exposures to site-related chemicals may have occurred at this site, people are not expected to become sick because of those exposures.

## What will happen next?

In the November 2004 health consultation, ATSDR recommended the following:

- That EPA conduct additional sampling at one residence for which the results were uncertain to verify the levels of carbon tetrachloride; chloroform; 1, 4-dichlorobenzene; and trichloroethene (TCE),
- That EPA, District of Columbia, and Maryland authorities coordinate oversight to prevent possible

future exposures if activities occur that could result in release of VOCs from the contaminated areas (e.g., basement or utility work or excavation).

ATSDR will assist, as needed, in further evaluations of additional environmental data to respond to public health questions and to prevent community exposures to contamination from the site.

## Where can I review the health consultation documents?

The health consultation documents are available for review on ATSDR's website at [http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/PHA/chillumperc/cps\\_p1.html](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/PHA/chillumperc/cps_p1.html) and <http://atsdr1.atsdr.cdc.gov/HAC/PHA/chilliumPerc112404HC-MD/chilliumPerc112404HC-MD.pdf> and at the following location:

Lamond Riggs Library  
5401 S. Dekota Avenue, N.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20011  
(202) 541-6255

If you would like to request a copy of the health consultations, please send a written request to the following address:

Chief, Program Evaluation, Records and Information Services Branch  
NCEH/ATSDR  
1600 Clifton Road (MS E-60)  
Atlanta, GA 30333

## Whom should I contact for more information?

For more information, please contact any of the Chillum Perc site team members:

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\*Monday through Friday from 9 AM to 5 PM Eastern time. When calling ATSDR's toll-free number, please mention the Chillum Perc site, Chillum, MD. You may leave a message if you call after business hours. Someone will return your call as soon as possible.

For additional information, visit ATSDR's Web site at <http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov>