

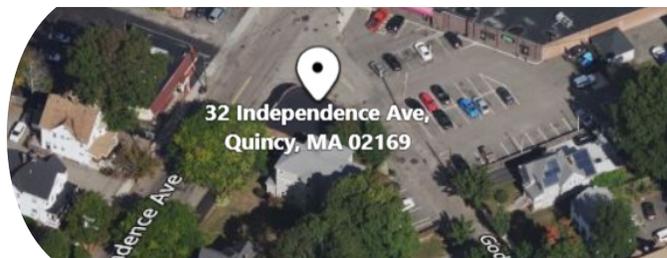
Adams Cleaners Site

Quincy, MA

U.S. EPA | HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM AT EPA NEW ENGLAND

THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND REMOVAL PROGRAM

responds to chemical, biological and radiological releases and large-scale national emergencies, including homeland security incidents. EPA conducts short term cleanups in the removal program when necessary to protect human health and the environment by either funding response actions directly or overseeing and enforcing actions conducted by potentially responsible parties.



SITE DESCRIPTION

The Adams Cleaners site includes the former dry-cleaning business which operated from the 1950s to 2015 and surrounding properties. The shop, located at 32 Independence Avenue in Quincy, MA, is closed and the building is unoccupied. The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) requested assistance from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) because of high contamination levels at the drycleaners and other neighborhood buildings.

BACKGROUND

Contamination at the Adams Cleaners site was first reported to the MassDEP in May 2016. Tetrachloroethylene, also known as perchloroethylene (PCE), is used as the cleaning agent in the dry-cleaning process. PCE is one of a group of chemicals known as chlorinated volatile organic compounds (CVOCs). When CVOCs are released into the environment, they can move in the soil gas and groundwater and enter buildings in a process known as vapor intrusion. People can be exposed to CVOCs by breathing the air where vapor intrusion is occurring.

The MassDEP worked with the property owner and dry cleaner to investigate contamination in homes and businesses in the area. MassDEP installed venting systems in homes where it considered the levels to pose an immediate risk. On August 18, 2021, the MassDEP asked the EPA for help in reducing the contamination.

For more information about tetrachloroethylene, please refer to:

Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs
<https://www.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxFAQs/ToxFAQsDetails.aspx?faqid=264&toxid=48>

Public Health Statement
<https://www.cdc.gov/TSP/PHS/PHS.aspx?phsid=263&toxid=48>

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EPA TOLL-FREE CUSTOMER SERVICE

1-888-EPA-7341

LEARN MORE AT:

response.epa.gov/adams_cleaners

continued >



If you have health related questions about tetrachloroethylene, contact:

Massachusetts Department of Public Health Bureau of Environmental Health
250 Washington Street Boston, MA 02108
617-624-5757
www.mass.gov/dph/environmental_health

SITE STATUS

From 2021 to 2023, EPA finished two rounds of indoor air sampling at numerous homes and businesses in the immediate neighborhood. EPA shared the results with each of the owners and tenants. The extent of contamination in the soil, soil gas, and groundwater has also been investigated. EPA will start a short-term cleanup, or removal action, to lower the levels of contamination coming from the former drycleaners.

NEXT STEPS: WHAT TO EXPECT

The cleanup of 32 Independence Ave. will have three parts: Set-up, Excavation, and Chemical Oxidation.

Site set-up: Several large trees will be cut down at the back of the dry-cleaning building. A temporary garage and construction fence will be put up. The building itself will not be torn down and EPA's cleanup will start in the inside of the building.

Excavation: Heavily contaminated soil near the surface will be dug up from beneath the building. Some of that soil will be placed into 55-gallon drums. The less contaminated soil will be stored in a container inside the temporary garage at the back of the building. Once the digging is done, all the contaminated soil will be removed, and the dug-up area will be filled with clean soil. These steps should take about one month.

While digging, EPA will use several methods to lower the chance that vapors coming from the contamination will go into the air. The different methods include covering soil with foam, using an air purifying ventilation system, storing excavated soil inside the temporary garage, and covering soil piles and digging areas with plastic sheeting.

Chemical Oxidation: After the contaminated soil is removed, EPA will drill borings, which are circular holes, where a chemical called permanganate will be injected into the deep contamination zone. The permanganate will react with the PCE and destroy it. This process is called chemical oxidation and it will be used at the drycleaners and possibly at other impacted properties. EPA expects that several of these injections will be needed. It may take a year or more to complete.

For some other impacted buildings in the neighborhood, EPA will be installing vapor reduction systems to help reduce the impact of vapor intrusion. These systems have suction pipes inserted through the basement floor into the soil underneath. Acting like a vacuum cleaner, a fan connected to the pipes draws the vapor gas from under the building and releases it into the outdoor air. The system prevents vapor from entering the building where people can breathe it.

Work is expected to begin the week of April 20, 2023, with the removal of several trees behind the Adams Cleaners building. EPA will leave as many trees as possible. People will see EPA employees and contractors wearing protective equipment when the digging begins and throughout the cleanup, due to their direct contact with materials and potential contamination. Please note that, for safety reasons, access to the sidewalk along the Adams Cleaners building may be limited during the cleanup.