

SUPERFUND

Fact Sheet

VANCOUVER WATER STATION

Vancouver, Washington



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY REGION 10

January 1999

In September 1998, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) selected continued operation of the existing air stripping treatment system as the final cleanup remedy for Water Station #1. This decision is outlined in a document called the Record of Decision (ROD) which is available for your review at the Vancouver Public Library listed at the end of this fact sheet.

Water Station #1

The remedial investigation of Water Station #1 concluded that tetrachloroethene (also known as perchloroethylene, or PCE) contamination in groundwater is persistent and present at levels that require continued treatment to protect human health. However, concentrations of PCE detected in the area of Water Station #1 were not high enough to indicate a source of PCE that could be responsible for the groundwater contamination at the wellfield. Therefore, no additional cleanup actions could be identified or taken. Overall, levels of PCE are showing a downward trend. The continued operation of the existing air stripping treatment system will ensure that the residents of Vancouver will be provided with water that meets federal and state standards and is safe to drink.

EPA held a 30-day public comment period from July 22 to August 21, 1998. EPA received two public comments which were responded to and are attached to the ROD. The first comment dealt with the investigation of potential sources of the PCE contamination and suggested that EPA should investigate current use by plastics companies in the area. The second comment expressed concern with the quality of Vancouver's drinking water and felt that even 1 excess cancer risk per 1,000,000 people exposed, was unacceptable. EPA's response is that the extra cancer risk was for untreated water. With the air stripping system, the treated water going to people's homes has no excess cancer risk because the PCE has been removed.

Background

In 1988, during routine well testing, the City found contaminants in production wells at both Water

Stations #1 and #4. Vancouver Water Station #1 is located on the southeast corner of Fourth Plain Boulevard and Fort Vancouver Way. Water Station #4 is located approximately 1/2 mile north of the Columbia River at the intersection of East Fifth Street and Blandford Drive. Both water stations supply drinking water to the city of Vancouver.

Several volatile organic compounds (VOCs) were detected during monitoring, but one of the most persistent detections was PCE, a chemical commonly used in dry-cleaning. The production wells showed detectable concentrations of PCE over the then proposed federal drinking water standards. EPA proposed to include Water Station #4 on the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL) in July 1991 and the proposal became final in October 1992. The NPL is a listing of the nation's priorities for full scale environmental investigation and possible cleanup. Water Station #1 was proposed to be included on the NPL in 1993 and became final in June 1994. Since PCE levels were higher at Water Station #4, the City immediately took it off-line until a treatment system could be designed and constructed to remove contaminants from the water. EPA installed monitoring wells around both stations to sample the PCE in the groundwater.

In January 1992, the City installed two air stripping towers at Water Station #4 and began operating the water station again. Although the PCE concentrations in the combined output at Water Station #1 remained below the federal and state standards for drinking water quality, to ensure that city drinking water was protected, the City installed five air stripping towers at Water Station #1 in May 1993. Air stripping towers "strip" or remove the contamination out of the water to below federal drinking water standards.

Next Steps at Water Station #4

EPA completed further investigation into the nature and extent of contamination at Water Station #4 in the fall of 1998. The results of that investigation will be available when EPA issues a Proposed Cleanup Plan sometime in the spring of 1999. In the meantime, the air stripping system continues to operate effectively.

The water from both Water Stations #4 and #1 are regularly sampled and continue to meet all federal and state standards for drinking water quality.

For More Information

A copy of the ROD has been placed in the Vancouver Public Library, Fort Vancouver Branch at 1007 E. Mill Plain Boulevard.

If you have any questions about Water Stations #1 or #4, please contact one of the following people:

Nancy Harney, EPA Site Manager, in Seattle at **(206) 553-6635**

Krista Rave, EPA Community Relations Coordinator, in Seattle, at **(206) 553-6686**
or toll free at 1-800-424-4372.

For those with impaired hearing or speech, please contact EPA's telecommunication device for the deaf (TDD) at (206) 553-1698. To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with disabilities by contacting one of the numbers listed above.



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