



Rummel Fibre September 30, 2003

Introduction

The Georgia Division of Public Health (GDPH) received a request from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (GEPD) to conduct a public health investigation at the Rummel Fibre Company (Rummel). GEPD is concerned about possible adverse health effects caused by past, present, and future exposure to contaminated groundwater from past facility operations. In response, GDPH reviewed residents' concerns and environmental sampling data provided to GEPD to evaluate whether contaminant levels in groundwater could represent a potential health hazard to the public.

Site Description and History

The 12-acre Rummel site was undeveloped prior to 1967 when Kay-Townes, Inc. (KTI) developed the property for the manufacture of television antennas and electronic equipment. The site is situated in a semi-rural area of east Rome, Georgia and bordered by woodland and residential property, and a solid waste disposal pit (SWDP) northeast of the facility. In the late 1970's, a portion of the property was sublet to manufacture plastic laminates for electrical panels and wire cloth filters. These manufacturing operations used trichloroethylene (TCE) for degreasing components, and other chemicals for electroplating and anodizing. Small quantities of solvents were reportedly discharged onto the ground at both the north central parking area and the northeast loading dock over a period of several years.

Environmental Sampling

Ground water was found to be the potential exposure medium pathway for Rummel. Groundwater can become contaminated when chemicals migrate or leach from soils or contaminated areas into an underlying aquifer. Wells and springs are supplied by groundwater, and it is only through drinking or other domestic uses of well and spring water (such as bathing or irrigating) that people are directly exposed to potentially contaminated groundwater. GDPH assessed available site data in its evaluation of groundwater contamination at the site.

Results

To the north of the site, TCE was found in three of the five individual water wells above the Safe Drinking Water

Act maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 5 micrograms/liter (ug/l), and 1,1-dichloroethene (1,1-DCE) was found above the MCL of 7 ug/l. One of these three wells was an irrigation well and never used as a potable water source. Sampling data obtained in 1999 showed peak concentrations of TCE for each potable water well at 100 ug/l and 270 ug/l. In addition, one of these wells showed a peak concentration of 1,1-DCE at 19 ug/l. Residents were immediately provided bottled water and soon after connected to the Floyd County water supply. The contamination plume is approximately 250 feet below ground; thus, there is no potential exposure to contaminated groundwater vapor at these residences.

Soon after off-site contamination was detected, an interim groundwater recovery and treatment system was installed. Groundwater analyses indicate that the concentration of contaminants has been declining, most likely due to natural attenuation and groundwater remediation.

Conclusions

Water from private wells on the site, and near the site, pose **no apparent public health hazard**. Past and current exposures do not exceed an ATSDR minimal risk level (MRL). Because the horizontal and vertical extent of groundwater contamination is known, groundwater data substantiates this conclusion. Future exposure to contaminated groundwater is not likely because residents who were exposed in the past are now connected to the Floyd county water supply and the contaminated water is being remediated.

Recommendations

- The three contaminated private wells should be properly abandoned and capped when remediation is complete after their usefulness as groundwater monitoring wells during site remediation ceases.
- Private well drilling should not be permitted in areas with contaminated groundwater so that future exposure is eliminated.
- As required by GEPD, continue remediation efforts as well as on-site/off-site monitoring of groundwater at Rummel.