

EPA Updates Superfund National Priorities List to Include Highway 3 PCE Site in Le Mars, Iowa

Agency will work to remediate site of PCE that originated from historic dry-cleaning services

September 7, 2022

Contact Information

Kellen Ashford (ashford.kellen@epa.gov)

913-551-7298



LENEXA, KAN. (SEPT. 7, 2022) – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced that it is adding five sites to the Superfund National Priorities List (NPL), including the Highway 3 PCE Site in Le Mars, Iowa.

Tetrachloroethene (PCE), an ingredient in dry-cleaning chemicals, has been identified in soil, groundwater, sub-slab vapors, and indoor air underneath and/or within several structures at the site that originated from historic dry-cleaning services located at the intersection of Highway 3 and Central Avenue.

“All people in this country, no matter the color of their skin, their ZIP code or income, deserve to live in communities free from harmful pollutants and contaminated lands,” said EPA Deputy Administrator Janet McCabe. “By adding sites to the Superfund National Priorities List, we are accelerating cleanups and working to ensure that more people living near the nation’s most serious uncontrolled or abandoned releases of contamination have the health and environmental protections they deserve.”

With this NPL update, the Biden-Harris administration is following through on its commitment to update the list twice a year, as opposed to once a year. By pledging to add sites more regularly to the NPL, EPA is taking action to protect the health of communities across the country while cleaning up and returning blighted properties

to safe and productive reuse in areas where environmental cleanup and jobs are needed most.

Background

The Superfund National Priorities List includes the nation's most serious uncontrolled or abandoned releases of contamination. The list serves as the basis for prioritizing EPA Superfund cleanup funding and enforcement actions. Only releases at non-federal sites included on the NPL are eligible to receive federal funding for long-term, permanent cleanup. Cleanup at federal facilities is funded by the lead federal agency responsible for the site.

EPA proposes sites to the NPL based on a scientific determination of risks to people and the environment, consistent with the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan. Before EPA adds a site to the NPL, it must meet EPA's requirements and be proposed for addition to the list in the Federal Register, subject to a 60-day public comment period. EPA will add the site to the NPL if it continues to meet the listing requirements after the public comment period closes and the Agency has responded to any comments.

Superfund cleanups provide health and economic benefits to communities. The program is credited for significant reductions in both birth defects and blood lead levels among children living near sites, and research has shown residential property values increase up to 24% within 3 miles of sites after cleanup.

Further, thanks to Superfund cleanups, communities are now using previously blighted properties for a wide range of purposes, including retail businesses, office space, public parks, residences, warehouses, and solar power generation. As of 2021, EPA has collected economic data on 650 Superfund sites. At these sites, there are 10,230 businesses operating, 246,000 people employed, an estimated \$18.6 billion in income earned by employees, and \$65.8 billion in sales generated by businesses.

[Learn more](#) about the Highway 3 PCE Superfund Site.

Learn more about the [Superfund program](#) and the [NPL](#).

For Federal Register notices and supporting documents for new proposed and new NPL sites, please visit [EPA's website](#).

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