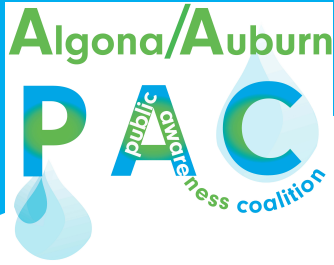


Questions from the Community



Trichloroethene (TCE)

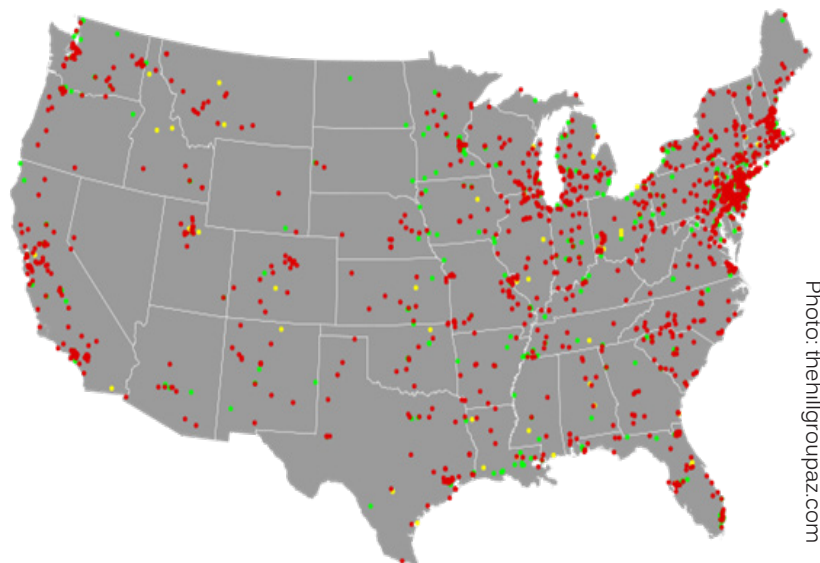


WHAT IS TCE?

Trichloroethene (TCE), also known as Trichloroethylene, is a colorless or blue, nonflammable liquid, with a sweet smell, that quickly releases vapors into the air. TCE is most commonly used as a degreaser in the fabrication of metal parts, the automotive industry and the dry cleaning industry. In the past, TCE was also used for medical purposes and to remove caffeine from coffee. In 1977, the Food and Drug Administration banned the direct use of TCE on the human body. Today, aside from industrial use, TCE is found in SOME household products such as paints, paint removers, spot removers, glues, adhesives, rug cleaning fluids, metal cleaners and typewriter correction fluids.

HOW WIDESPREAD IS TCE POLLUTION IN THE UNITED STATES?

Nearly 50% of Superfund Sites (sites known to have a release of hazardous substances in soil, groundwater, etc.) in the U.S. report TCE as a major contaminant. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has found TCE in at least 61% of current or former sites listed as National Priorities for toxic cleanup. TCE is the most commonly reported organic pollutant in groundwater in the U.S.



Map of Superfund Sites in the United States.

WHY WAS TCE USED AT THE BOEING AUBURN FABRICATION PLANT?



Photo: WA State Department of Ecology

Boeing used TCE at the Auburn facility to degrease metal parts. Up until the late 1970s, TCE was widely used across the United States in metal industries because it can be used to clean metal parts and machines without water.

HOW DOES TCE AFFECT MY HEALTH?

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recognizes TCE as a chemical that can cause cancer.

For more information please contact Jeanette Ordonez or visit us online

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Algona/Auburn Public Awareness Coalition

