



Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ No. 1

July 2019

Introduction

This frequently asked questions (FAQ) sheet contains information about the Burlington Industries Cheraw site (the Site). The United States Environmental Protection Agency is committed to engaging the community in Cheraw. This FAQ provides information that is commonly asked about the Site and the effects of Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) which is the primary contaminant of concern being addressed at the Site.

What is the status of removing the PCB contamination in Cheraw?

The EPA conducted time-critical removal action at the Site beginning in 2017 by addressing contaminated surface soils at 14 residential properties. This action removed and replaced nearly 7,000 tons of contaminated soil and was completed in March of 2018.

The EPA signed an Administrative Order on Consent (AOC) with Highland Industries to address contaminated soils at Huckleberry Park, the Highland property, and approximately 1,900 feet of drainage ditch beginning near the Highland property. This action removed and replaced more than 21,000 tons of contaminated soil and was completed in June of 2019.

Following Hurricane Florence, EPA identified PCBs inside four residences and PCB contamination on the yards of five other properties that required immediate removal. The EPA completed decontamination of the interior of the four residences in October of 2018. Removal of contaminated soil from the five other properties was conducted primarily in November of 2018 with completion in May of 2019; an additional 800 tons of contaminated soil was removed and replaced during this action.

Additional work will be conducted in July of 2019 with the removal of contaminated sediment from a short segment of an unnamed tributary. This work is anticipated to require approximately three to four weeks and will be completed by August of 2019.

The actions taken by EPA and Highland Industries have removed the highest concentrations of PCBs in the environment at the Site and replaced that contaminated soil with clean soil. The Burlington Industries Cheraw site was listed to the EPA's National Priorities List (NPL) on May 17, 2018. This means that the Site has been identified for investigation and comprehensive long-term cleanup. The EPA along with South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) will be evaluating remaining concentrations of PCBs in the waterways from the former Burlington Industries facility, including properties adjacent to those waterways and the Pee Dee River.

Is Huckleberry Park going to open any time soon and if so, is there any concerns I should have about my children playing in Huckleberry Park?

The soil in Huckleberry Park is clean and the park is safe for children to play in. However, additional investigation is necessary in the creek that borders the park, so children should not play in the creek.

Contaminated soils were removed from Huckleberry Park in 2018 and replaced with clean soil. After flooding from Hurricanes Florence and Michael, the park was re-sampled and test results confirmed it was not re-contaminated by floodwaters. Wilson Branch, which borders Huckleberry Park, is one of the waterways that will require further testing by EPA and South Carolina DHEC to determine if PCBs are in the creek at levels above the cleanup goal that need to be addressed. If elevated above the cleanup goal the EPA will work with the Town of Cheraw to provide residents with information about Huckleberry Park and install signage that explains the ongoing work in the creek. EPA will conduct sampling at the park to ensure that it has not been re-contaminated if flooding occurs in the park before remedial work is completed.

What is the ultimate goal of PCB cleanup in Cheraw?

The goal of actions taken by EPA and Highland Industries in 2017 through 2019 has been the removal of the highest concentrations of PCBs in the environment for the protection of human health.

The listing of the Burlington Industries Cheraw site to the EPA's National Priorities List (NPL) means that the Site has been identified for investigation and comprehensive long-term cleanup. The goal of evaluating remaining concentrations of PCBs in the waterways and properties adjacent to those waterways is to determine the long-term risk to human health and the environment. Future cleanup activities will be designed based on the findings of this evaluation.

Will there be continued monitoring of the area after cleanup?

The areas cleaned by EPA and Highland Industries from 2017 through 2019 have removed PCBs on those properties and replaced that contaminated soil with clean soil. There is no need for continued monitoring on those properties.

Wilson Branch, which borders Huckleberry Park, is one of the waterways that will require further evaluation by EPA and South Carolina DHEC to determine if there are remaining concentrations of PCBs that need to be addressed. The EPA will work with the Town of Cheraw to publicize information about Huckleberry Park and install signage that explains the ongoing work in the adjacent creek. If flooding occurs in the park before remedial work at the Site is completed, the EPA will conduct sampling at the park to ensure that it has not been re-contaminated.

Do I need to be concerned about stormwater runoff coming onto my property from a contaminated area?

EPA and Highland Industries have removed the highest concentrations of PCBs in the soil at the Site and replaced contaminated soil with clean materials. The action prevents migration of contaminated sediment to other yards in addition to protecting residential property owners whose yards were cleaned. Undeveloped parcels which have not been addressed yet are covered with plants and trees that will prevent erosion. High concentrations of PCBs in creek and ditch sediment have been removed to protect downstream residential properties.

Is it safe to plant a garden in my yard?

The EPA has removed all high concentrations of PCBs from residential yards. Gardening can be done in all yards in Cheraw, but the EPA reminds gardeners that good health practices should be followed in any garden:

- Clean vegetables well before cooking or eating
 - Throw away old and outer leaves of vegetables
 - Wash all vegetables with cold water. Scrub vegetables with a brush to help remove dirt. Rinse vegetables well before eating.
 - Scrub and peel root crops such as carrots, potatoes, turnips and onions before eating them.
- Add peat moss, compost, or manure to your soil.
- Keep soil at pH 6.5 or higher
- Cover bare soil with 2 to 4 inches of mulch such as wood chips, grass clippings, or compost
- Do not grow vegetables in the drip zone (i.e. under the roof eaves) or around the foundation of older buildings

Is it safe to have and use a pool in my yard?

There are no site related environmental concerns with using a pool in any neighborhood around the Site.

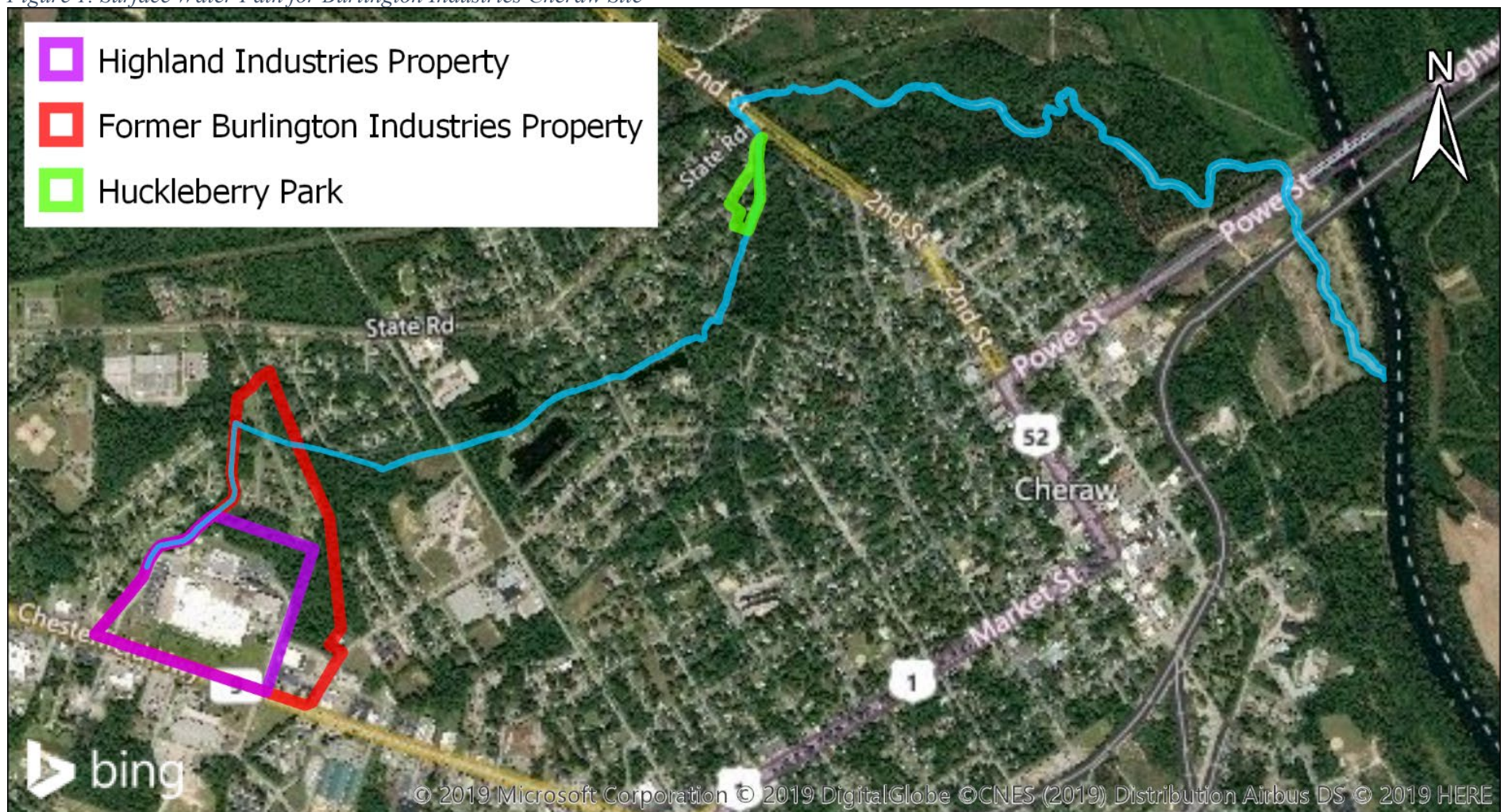
Do I need to be concerned about dust from activities like cutting grass or blowing leaves?

The EPA cleaned residential yards in 2017 and 2018 that had high concentrations of PCBs; based on these removal actions, there is no concern of exposure to PCBs from regular yard work in these yards.

The EPA and South Carolina DHEC will be evaluating concentrations of PCBs in the waterways, Pee Dee River, and adjacent properties, as part of the long-term investigation and cleanup for the Site. The occupied residential parcels along this waterway have received initial sampling - and in some cases, PCBs were detected above initial screening levels. As a precautionary measure, South Carolina DHEC provided a list of steps to take to reduce dust exposure, including a recommendation to wet dry patches prior to mowing. Residents who received this notification should continue to follow these steps until they receive new sampling results or cleanup is provided.

Based on current data, there are no concerns with exposure to PCBs from regular maintenance activities in yards that are not *immediately* adjacent to the surface water path from the former Burlington Industries facility. A map of this surface water path is provided below:

Figure 1. Surface Water Path for Burlington Industries Cheraw Site



What types of activities should I avoid in areas known to be contaminated by PCBs?

The EPA and South Carolina DHEC will be evaluating concentrations of PCBs in the waterways from the former Burlington Industries facility as part of the long-term investigation and site cleanup. The investigation will include, including properties adjacent to those waterways and the Pee Dee River. The occupied residential parcels along this waterway have received initial sampling. In some cases, PCBs were detected above initial screening levels. As a precautionary measure, South Carolina DHEC provided a list of steps to take to reduce PCB exposure from soil and dust. These residents should continue to follow these steps (listed below) until new sampling results or cleanup is provided:

- Stay out of the drainage ditch and do not let children or animals play in or near the drainage ditch;
- Wash your hands before eating, sleeping or caring for children;
- Wash your hands after playing or working in the yard;
- Don't let children eat dirt;
- Limit the amount of dust entering your home by using a doormat to wipe feet before entering;
- Wipe off window sills, table tops and other surfaces that children can reach or that are used for eating; and,
- When mowing the lawn, avoid running the mower over patches of dirt or wet down dirt areas prior to mowing. Avoid mowing the area next to the drainage ditch.

What in general are health effects from PCB exposure?

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) has produced a useful fact sheet which answers the most frequently asked health questions about PCBs. This fact sheet is one in a series of summaries about hazardous substances and their health effects known as "ToxFAQs". The ToxFAQs information on PCBs is located at [atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts17.pdf](https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts17.pdf)

Provided below is a brief summary of health effects from PCBs. For more information, refer to the ATSDR ToxFAQs document on PCBs or call the Center for Disease Control (CDC) Information Center at 1-800-232-4636.

How might I be exposed to PCBs?

- Eating contaminated food (fish, meat, and dairy products).
- Breathing air containing dust near hazardous waste sites
- Drinking contaminated water (surface/ditch water, river water, etc)

Most people have low levels of PCBs in their body because nearly everyone has been environmentally exposed to PCBs.

*If exposed to **high** levels of PCBs for short periods of time, possible health effects are*

- Skin conditions such as acne and rashes
- Liver damage

If exposed to PCBs for long periods of time, possible health effects are

- Liver and biliary tract cancer

*For babies born to or nursed by mothers exposed to **high** levels of PCBs, possible health effects are*

- Lower birth weight
- Motor skill problems
- Decrease in short-term memory
- Affected immune system

How is exposure risk to the community measured?

There will be comprehensive investigation to determine if a long-term cleanup is needed. EPA will evaluate the risk at the Site by looking at exposures to contaminated soil and water. EPA's risk evaluation approach is conservative and assumes a lifetime exposure of 24 hours per day during 350 days of the year for 26 years. Based on a baseline risk assessment, cleanup levels will be determined.

How do exposure risks change with age, sensitive populations, and pets?

The specific health risks and potential health effects from exposure to PCB will be determined as part of ATSDR's Public Health Assessment.

During the public health assessment process, ATSDR will:

- Listen to, and make a list of, community health concerns.
- Collect and assess environmental health data.
- Provide health education and outreach to the community.
- Will write a public health assessment report
 - Release the draft report to the community
 - Community members can provide comments on the reports.
 - ATSDR addressed all comments in the final report and will include all comments in the appendix of the reports.
 - Release a final report.
- Provide a fact sheet during the public comment period to let you know:
 - If you may be exposed to site chemicals
 - If exposure happens how your health could be affected.

For more information on ATSDR's Public Health Assessment or health impacts from PCB exposure, contact ATSDR Region 4:

- John Wheeler, ATSDR Region IV Director, 404.562.1782 or JWheeler1@cdc.gov
- Leann Bing, ATSDR Region IV Representative, 404.562.1784 or KBing@cdc.gov

Who should I contact for more information?

For more information on the Site or with further questions, please contact the EPA Region 4 Community Involvement Coordinator, Stephanie Brown, at 877-718-3752

Updates on progress related to the remedial process for the Burlington Industries Cheraw Site will be published to the site webpage at: epa.gov/superfund/burlington-cheraw

FOR MORE INFORMATION

EPA Remedial Project Manager

Jeff Crowley 404-562-9587

Crowley.Jeffery@epa.gov

EPA National Priorities List Coordinator

Cathy Amoroso 404-562-8637

Amoroso.Cathy@epa.gov

EPA Community Involvement Coordinator

Stephanie Brown

404-562-8450

Brown.StephanieY@epa.gov

Information Repository

Matheson Memorial Library

227 Huger Street

Cheraw, South Carolina 29520