



WHY DID I GET A NOTICE?

You received a notice because you own property within ¼ mile of a known regulated contamination site in Sonoma County.

WHAT WILL I LEARN BY READING THIS?

I will learn:

- how to use GeoTracker, an environmental data information system
- information about water quality testing
- about potential health risks associated with specific environmental hazards in my area **if** I get my water from a private well



HOW DO I KNOW IF MY WATER COMES FROM A PRIVATE WELL?

If you get a water bill in the mail each month, you are on a public water system. Public water systems are regulated by government agencies. Regular testing is required to ensure drinking water standards established by the State of California are met.

If you do not receive a water bill, you probably get your water from a well located somewhere on or near your property. Water quality from private wells is

not regulated by any government agency. The responsibility for assuring the quality of water from private wells rests with the well owner.

Some properties may use public water for their household uses (ie. cooking, bathing, drinking, etc.) and may have a private well that is used for irrigation or agricultural purposes. If you use well water for animals or to irrigate edible crops, the quality of water from your well is important.

If you are a tenant and are not sure about your water source, contact your landlord.

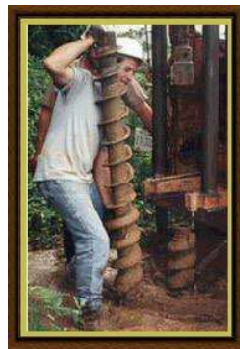
DO I NEED THIS INFORMATION IF I DON'T HAVE A WELL?

No. While you may find this information interesting, it is directed specifically to private well owners whose water quality is not regularly monitored. Public water systems are required to be monitored regularly for compliance with drinking water standards.

WHY DID I GET A NOTICE IF I DON'T HAVE A WELL?

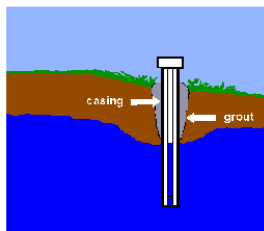
There is no easy way to accurately determine who uses a well and who does not. We want to make sure that all properties within ¼ mile of a known contamination site have this information so they can take steps to assure that their drinking water is not a hazard to their health.

HOW CAN AN ENVIRONMENTAL RISK FROM A WELL AFFECT MY HEALTH?



Wells are constructed by drilling or hand digging a hole in the ground until an underground water source is reached. Casing (a pipe) is placed in the hole with a pump to lift the water to the surface. Grout (a concrete seal) is placed around the

upper portion of the well between the hole and the pipe to stop any surface contamination from entering the water. The underground water source is referred to as an “aquifer” or groundwater. Different aquifers may exist at different depths in the ground.



Once soil, and especially groundwater, is contaminated in an area, any well that pumps water in the vicinity may be subject to that contamination. Use of the well would then subject the user to the contaminant hazard.

WHAT KIND OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH RISK IS NEAR ME?

You were sent a notice because you own property(ies) within ¼ mile of a known man-made (not naturally occurring) contamination site that is regulated by a governmental agency. Man-made contaminants have leaked from an activity on a site near you, such as underground storage tanks, old dry cleaning operations, military facilities, computer manufacturers, chemical manufacturing plants, agricultural operations, etc. and are being monitored by a government agency. The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) has more information about specific [drinking water contaminants](#) on their website. There are also naturally occurring sources of contamination.



WHAT IS A LEAKING UNDERGROUND TANK SITE?

Many of the sites overseen by a regulatory agency are due to leaking underground storage tanks. Most leaking underground tanks were located at current or former gasoline stations and contained petroleum products such as

gasoline or diesel fuel. Other underground tanks might contain chemicals important to the current or former business or manufacturing operation. An example would be an underground tank containing solvents such as tetrachloroethylene (PCE) located at a dry cleaning business.

In 1984, the State of California passed a law requiring underground storage tanks to meet certain minimum structural standards to prevent leaking that might create an environmental and/or public health hazard.

As the old substandard tanks are removed, the surrounding soil is tested to determine if leaking has occurred. When contaminated soil is discovered, further investigation and remediation (cleanup) is required.



WHO IS IN CHARGE OF CONTAMINATED SITES AND CLEAN-UP (REMEDIATION)?

Oversight of the investigation and remediation (cleanup) of contaminated sites is done by a regulatory agency. If it is a leaking underground storage tank that has primarily leaked petroleum products, the oversight in Sonoma County is usually done by the [Local Oversight Program \(LOP\) of Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Division](#).

Other contaminated sites, particularly those with solvents or other chemicals that generally result from manufacturing processes, are usually regulated through the regional boards of the [Water Resources Control Board](#) of the [California Environmental Protection Agency \(Cal/EPA\)](#). There are two regional boards which regulate sites in Sonoma County: the [North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board \(NCRWQCB\)](#) which covers the area north of Petaluma, and the [San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board \(SFRWQCB\)](#) which covers southern Sonoma County and some of the eastern county, including the city of Sonoma.

Other agencies that may be the regulatory authority (lead agency) include the Cal/EPA's [Department of Toxic Substances Control \(DTSC\)](#), or any number of

federal agencies, including the [United States Environmental Protection Agency \(US EPA\)](#).

WHAT DOES THE OVERSIGHT (LEAD) AGENCY DO?

The regulatory agency overseeing a site (lead agency) determines a responsible party (RP) for the contamination and oversees the steps taken by the RP to do work aimed toward the ultimate goal of remediation and closure as a contamination site.

The RP usually hires private environmental consultants to do the work required for investigation and remediation. Depending on the nature and severity of the contamination, this generally includes such things as:

- submitting a work plan
- testing and borings
- installation of monitoring wells
- performing a sensitive receptor survey in the neighborhood to identify nearby domestic wells at risk
- excavation or other remediation of contaminated material

When contamination is found, the lead agency can direct the RP or his/her consultant(s) to test adjacent domestic wells that are discovered in the sensitive receptor survey that may be at risk of contamination from the site. Not all wells subject to potential contamination may be discovered during the investigation process.



HOW CAN I FIND OUT ABOUT CONTAMINATED SITES NEAR MY WELL?

So that the public can be better informed about specific environmental risks that may be near their property, the State of California has instituted [GeoTracker](#). GeoTracker is an accessible public information database on the internet that locates contaminated sites in the state by address. Information available on GeoTracker

includes a history of the site, chemicals discovered at each site, and remediation measures. Additionally, it lists the lead agency and contact telephone number to obtain more information about each site.

GeoTracker can help you determine how far away a contaminated site is from your well and what chemicals are involved in the contamination. [GeoTracker](http://www.geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov) is a relatively new program that is still being developed, refined, and checked for accuracy. The accuracy of site locations depends on many factors, including accurate field measurements and accurate data input. Data is continually being added. Do not assume that what you see on the screen is completely accurate. The appropriate regulator for each site is listed and can provide additional information and answer site-specific questions.

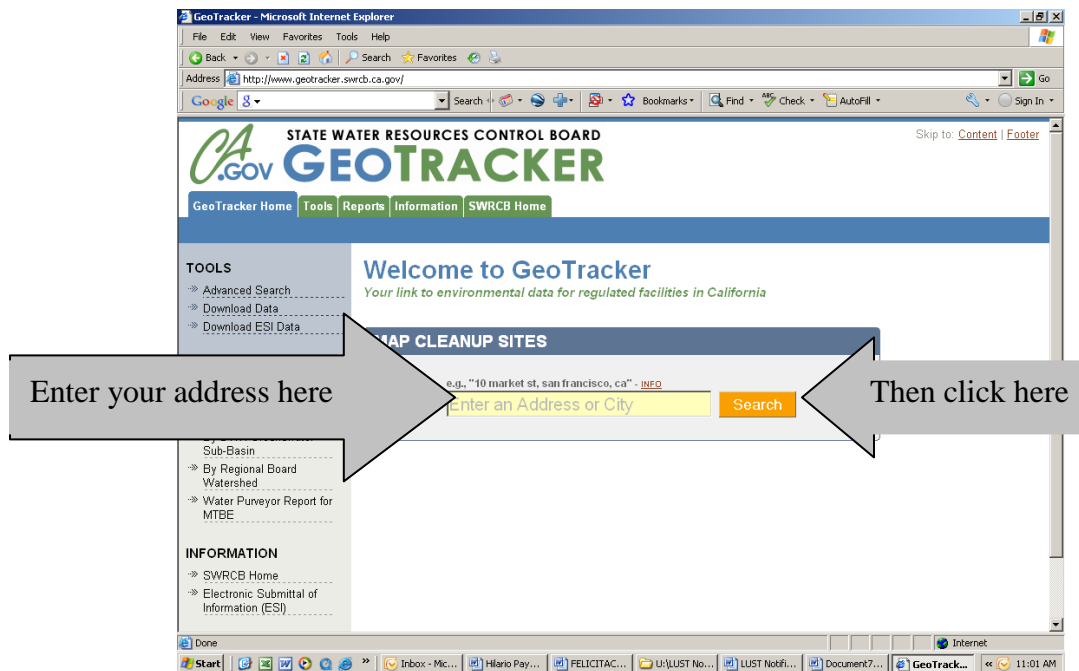


HOW DO I USE GEOTRACKER?

GeoTracker is located on the internet at:

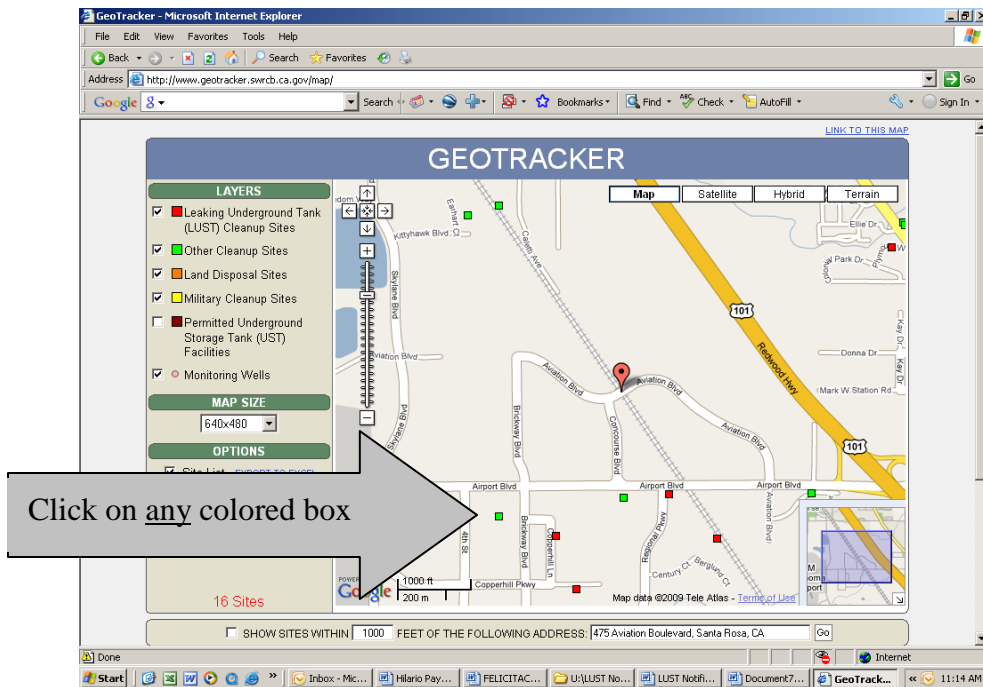
<http://www.geotracker.waterboards.ca.gov>

On the opening screen, simply enter your address, including city and state, and click on the “search” button.

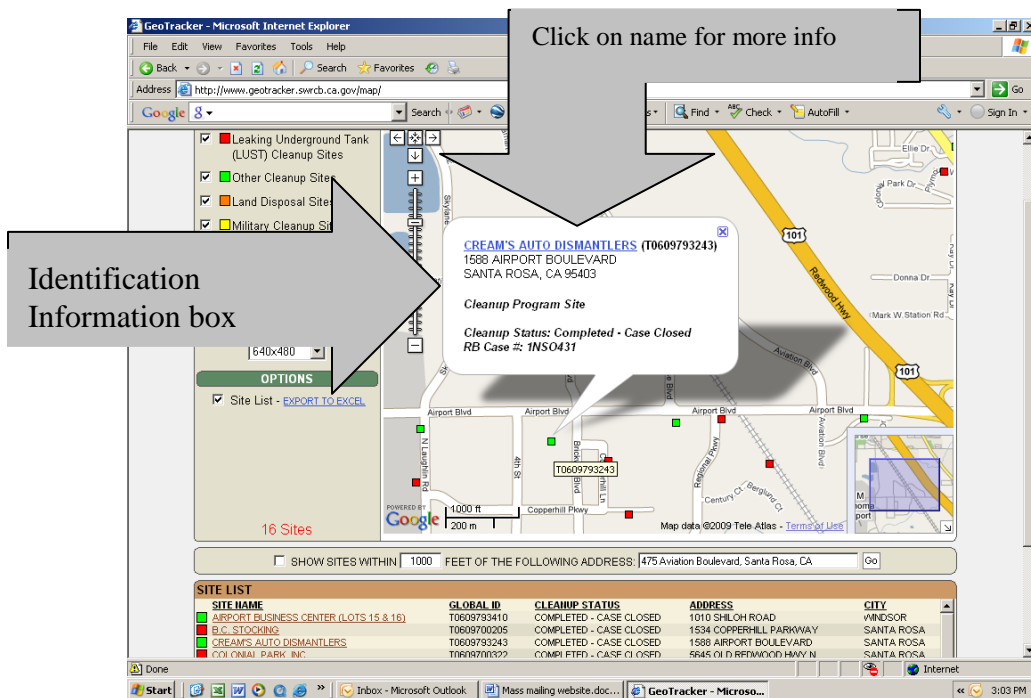


The next screen is an area map with an orange “pin” at the address you entered, along with colored boxes showing nearby contamination sites.

To get more information about a site, click on its colored box.



A text box will appear giving the name of the site, the address, the status of the site, and which regulatory agency is responsible for oversight.



If you then click on the name of the site, the case file will appear, with topic tabs for virtually all information known about the site. Simply click on the tabs for the information you seek.

The screenshot shows the GeoTracker website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with 'Topic Tabs' (Summary, Cleanup Status History, Regulatory Activities, Environmental Data (ES), Site Maps / Documents, Community Involvement) and 'Case Contact Info' (CLEANUP OVERSIGHT AGENCIES, NORTH COAST RWQCB (REGION 1) (LEAD) - CASE #, CASEWORKER: REGIONAL WATER BOARD SITE). The main content area displays the site name 'CREAM'S AUTO DISMANTLERS (T0609793243) - (MAP)' and the address '1588 AIRPORT BOULEVARD, SANTA ROSA, CA, 95403, SONOMA COUNTY, CLEANUP PROGRAM SITE'. Below this, there are sections for 'Regulatory Profile', 'CLEANUP STATUS' (COMPLETED - CASE CLOSED AS OF 3/25/2005), 'POTENTIAL CONTAMINANTS OF CONCERN' (WASTE OIL / MOTOR / HYDRAULIC / LUBRICATING), 'POTENTIAL MEDIA AFFECTED' (AQUIFER USED FOR DRINKING WATER SUPPLY), 'FILE LOCATION' (REGIONAL BOARD), and 'Site History' (No site history available). The page footer includes 'Back to Top', 'Contact Us', and 'Copyright © 2008 State of California'.

WHAT IF MY QUESTIONS AREN'T ANSWERED ON GEOTRACKER?

Please contact the agency responsible for the site and ask for the caseworker as indicated on GeoTracker.

For the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, please call (707) 576-2220.

For the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board, please call (510) 622-2300 or (510) 622-2366.

For Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Division, Local Oversight Program (LOP), please call (707) 565-6565.

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT DISTANCE IS "SAFE"?

Using distance as your only measurement for safety may not be adequate. **THE ONLY WAY TO KNOW THAT THE WATER FROM YOUR WELL IS SAFE IS TO HAVE IT TESTED.**



Please keep in mind that the oversight agency requires the RP to define the size and direction of flow of the contamination plume (i.e. area) and to monitor the plume activity. If a known well appears to be at risk, the oversight agency will direct the sampling of that well.

IF YOU HAVE A PRIVATE WELL THAT IS IMMEDIATELY ADJACENT TO A CONTAMINATION SITE AND IT HAS NOT BEEN TESTED, PLEASE CONTACT THE CASE WORKER AT THE LEAD AGENCY FOR THAT SITE.

HOW DO I KNOW IF I SHOULD TEST MY WELL WATER?

The only way to determine that your well water is safe to drink is to have it tested. No regulatory agency monitors the quality of water in your individual private well. If you live near an area of known environmental risk, such as a leaking underground storage tank site, it increases the reasons you would want to test the quality of your water supply. The results of the testing can help you make an informed, intelligent choice.

In general, the closer your well is to a known source of man-made contamination, the greater the possibility that the contamination could affect your well.

WHERE CAN I HAVE MY WATER TESTED?

Water should be tested at a laboratory certified by the State of California to do water testing. Certified laboratories located in or near Sonoma County include the following:

ALPHA ANALYTICAL LABORATORIES

208 Mason Street
Ukiah, CA 95482

(707) 468-0401

ANALYTICAL SCIENCES

100 Liberty Street
Petaluma, CA 94952

(707) 769-3128

BRELJE & RACE

425 South E Street
Santa Rosa, CA 95404

(707) 544-8807

CAL TEST ANALYTICAL LABORATORY

1885 North Kelly Road
Napa, CA

(707) 258-4049



WHAT SHOULD I TEST FOR?

What you should test for depends entirely on your contamination concerns. There is an information booklet [“What You Need to Know about Water Quality In Your Well”](#) that may help you decide which testing is most appropriate.

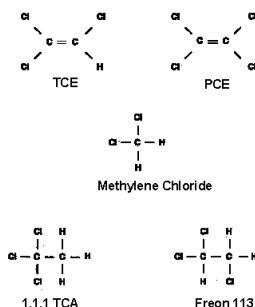
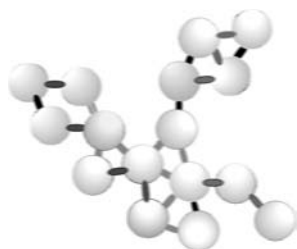
Consult with the laboratory. They can be very helpful in assisting you with making choices about the most appropriate tests to perform. Consulting with the site regulator may also help provide additional information to assist you in making choices about testing your well water.

HOW MUCH WILL IT COST AND HOW LONG WILL IT TAKE?

The lab cost will depend upon which tests you choose to run and which lab you choose to use. Each lab offers a variety of individual tests and groups (panels) of tests. Prices may vary at each laboratory.

When in doubt, run a panel instead of a single test. As an example, instead of running a single test for gasoline, it is much more cost effective (for both the laboratory and the consumer) and much more informative to run a Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPH) panel which includes detections of key petroleum products. Ask the lab what tests and panels of tests they have available to meet your needs.

Some communities have joined together to reduce laboratory costs by bulk sampling. This means that the lab can sample many wells in a particular neighborhood on one day instead of traveling back and forth on separate days and having to set up individual tests.



IF I HAVE MY WATER TESTED AND IT IS CONTAMINATED, WHAT SHOULD I DO?

IF YOU HAVE YOUR WATER TESTED AND CONTAMINATION IS DISCOVERED, contact the agency responsible for the site of contamination nearest to you. If your water is contaminated and you do not live near a known contamination area, call County of Sonoma Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Division at (707) 565-6565.

If your well is contaminated, and until you can receive information on the specific chemical detected, it would be prudent to drink and cook with bottled water. Health risks and effects vary significantly, depending on the type and amount of contamination discovered.

WILL I GET SICK FROM DRINKING CONTAMINATED WATER?

There is no way to determine if you will become ill from contaminated water. Some of the factors that play a role in determining whether or not you may become ill are:

- the potency of the chemical
- the amount (dose) of the chemical found in the water

- the length of time you were exposed to the contaminated water (duration)
- your over-all health
- the ability of your immune system to combat illness
- your age – infants, children and the elderly may be at higher risk

Each chemical has its own associated health risks. Utilizing the analytical section of GeoTracker for a specific site can assist you in finding out which chemicals are located at sites near you.

Health and other information on specific chemicals found to commonly contaminate groundwater can be found on ToxFAQS information sheets created by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR):

<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaq.html>

Go to the “A-Z Index for ToxFAQS” to find the chemical for which you wish more information. Or, click on “Search ToxFAQS”, then type in the name of the chemical.



WHAT LEVELS OF CHEMICALS ARE HARMFUL?

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and the State of California establish standards for public drinking water supplies which can be used to guide your decisions on whether to seek an alternative source of water. They have established Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCLs) for a number of hazardous substances which have been commonly discovered in drinking water. The MCL is the number below which it is unlikely that any adverse health risks may be incurred. If your water test results indicate contamination by a chemical at or above the MCL, it is important to take steps to minimize your health risk, including the use of bottled water, installation of a water treatment system, and/or permanent connection to a safe water supply. The federal MCLs are included on the ATSDR ToxFAQs sheets. For more information on the standards for California public drinking water systems, visit the [California Drinking Water Systems](#)

website on [Chemicals and Contaminants in Drinking Water](#). There are no established standards for water quality in private wells.

IS THERE A MEDICAL TEST I CAN TAKE TO SEE IF I'VE BEEN EXPOSED?

There are currently no medical tests you can take to see if you have actually been exposed to **most** chemical contaminations. This is because most chemicals do not remain in the human body for long periods. The only way to determine potential exposure is to have your well water tested. Even if a medical test is available for a particular chemical and the result is positive, there may be a number of possible ways a person might be exposed to any given chemical, and it is virtually impossible to draw a direct cause-and-effect relationship.



WHAT IF MY WATER TEST SHOWS CONTAMINATION AND I HAVE SOME OF THE SYMPTOMS LISTED AS A POSSIBLE HEALTH EFFECT FOR MY KIND OF CONTAMINATION?

CONSULT YOUR MEDICAL CARE PROVIDER. Once documentation of contamination in your well is provided, the Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Division, has available an Exposure History Information form which you can request by telephone at (707) 565-6565 or by fax at (707) 565-6525. This form is designed for you to complete and give to your medical care provider to document your potential exposure and it becomes a permanent part of your medical records.

Even with a potential exposure and symptoms, drawing a correlation or link between actual illness/disease and the contamination in your water supply is difficult to establish. This is because an individual encounters an infinite number of potential exposures from a variety of sources in a lifetime. These potential exposures occur at various levels during all the normal things we all do every day: breathing, eating, drinking, bathing, working, playing, vacationing, etc.

HOW LONG DO THESE CHEMICALS STAY IN GROUNDWATER?

Without remediation, the natural lifespan of the chemicals in groundwater could be virtually limitless. Through efforts by the lead agencies and conscientious Responsible Parties, these threats are being reduced. With proper remediation and through natural processes, the chemical levels in groundwater near contaminated sites may eventually be returned to acceptable levels.



CAN I MAKE MY WELL WATER SAFE?

Treatment systems are available to remove most types of contamination, although there is no one treatment that will remove all types of contaminants. You are advised to contact a well water professional for further information about treatment systems. Any treatment system requires on-going maintenance. Some relevant questions to ask a well water professional are:

- Will this system effectively remove the contaminant?
- What is the initial cost of the treatment system?
- What is the cost of replacement media and maintenance?
- If the treatment method produces a waste product, will the waste require special disposal?
- How easy is it to maintain the system?
- Approximately how long will the system last before maintenance is required?
- Has the device been certified to establish the efficiency of its removal claims?



WHAT IF I'M PLANNING TO BUY PROPERTY WITH A WELL OR IF I'M GOING TO DRILL A WELL IN THE FUTURE?

If you have a well, have it tested. If you are going to buy a property with a well, have it tested. Investigate current and historical uses of nearby properties for potential sources of contamination.

Unfortunately, if you are going to have a new well drilled, there is no way to know in advance what the quality of the water will be. Work with your well driller to locate the well where it will be least likely to encounter possible contamination. After the well is drilled, have the water tested for bacteriological and inorganic chemical contamination and for any other chemical contaminants that are known to exist in the area.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE INFORMATION?

If your questions have not been answered, there are a number of places to obtain additional information.

For technical information about a specific site, contact the Lead Agency listed on GeoTracker.

For medical information, contact your medical care provider.

For chemical effects information, you may contact several of the agencies listed below including Sonoma County Department of Health Services, Environmental Health Division.

The following contact numbers are provided for your convenience:

United States Government

Department of Health and Human Services
Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry
4770 Buford Hwy NE
Atlanta, GA 30341
E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov
Phone: (800) 232-4636
<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/>

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Phone: (866) EPA-WEST

<http://www.epa.gov/>

State of California

California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA)
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 445-3846
<http://www.calepa.ca.gov/>

Cal/EPA Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC)
1001 I Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-2828
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 806
Sacramento, CA 95812-0806
(800) 728-6942
<http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/>

Cal/EPA Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)
601 North Seventh St.
P.O. Box 942732
Sacramento, California 94234-7320
(916) 322-2308
Fax: (916) 323-9869
<http://www.oehha.ca.gov/water.html>

California Department of Public Health (CDPH)
Environmental Health Investigations Branch (EHIB)
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1700
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: (510) 620-3620
Fax: (510) 620-3720
<http://www.ehib.org/index.jsp>

San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (SFBRWQCB)
(in Sonoma County serving Sonoma, Kenwood, Penngrove and south)
1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: (510) 622-2300
Fax: (510) 622-2460
http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb2/groundwater_problems.html

North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (NCRWQCB)
(in Sonoma County serving Oakmont, Rohnert Park and north)
5550 Skylane Boulevard, Suite A
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Phone: (707) 576-2220
Fax: (707) 523-0135
<http://www.swrcb.ca.gov/rwqcb1/>

Sonoma County

Department of Health Services (DHS)
Environmental Health Division (EH)
475 Aviation Blvd., Suite 220
Santa Rosa, CA 95403
Phone: (707) 565-6565
Fax: (707) 565-6525
<http://www.sonoma-county.org/health/eh/index.htm>

Permit and Resource Management Department (PRMD)
2550 Ventura Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95403-2829
Phone: (707) 565-1900
Fax: (707) 565-1103
<http://www.sonoma-county.org/prmd/>