

About the CCI CAG

History

The Chemical Commodities Inc. (CCI) EPA superfund site is located in the western section of the City of Olathe, Kansas. CCI operated a chemical recycling facility from 1951 to 1989 which brokered new and used chemicals. This company also served as a sales representative for several chemical manufacturers. The chemicals were inappropriately handled on site and storage were stored in a variety of containers including underground storage tanks, above ground tanks, barrels, boxes, glass containers, and other storage compartments. Chemicals stored or sold on site include (but are not limited to) tetrachloroethylene, perchloroethylene, dichlorobenzene, 1,1,1 trichloroethane, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride, pesticides, polychlorinated biphenyls, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and heavy metals.

In 1977, after the seventh fire in ten years, the City of Olathe responding to resident complaints concerning runoff from the facility cited Chemical Commodities Inc. for unsafe hazardous conditions. In 1981 EPA investigations indicated a number of violations which included off site runoff, inadequate housekeeping, inadequate waste handling practices, uncertain conditions of the underground storage tanks, and possible chemical impacts to the soils. In 1986, a test on the three underground storage tanks indicated all three were releasing hazardous substances into the ground. In 1988 a CCI truck carrying 3,000 pounds of ammonium perchlorate caught fire. This resulted in another inspection of the facility. Based on the site's history and numerous environmental and public health threats, the EPA issued a Unilateral Administrative Order to shut down CCI. In 1989, due to EPA determining the site owner was not meeting the requirements of the order, a CERCLA removal action was performed. While this removal action mitigated the danger to the public and environment by removing all drums, tanks, boxes, and storage tanks. Contaminated top soils were removed, and an interceptor trench was built in an attempt to remediate contaminated ground water. Unfortunately, the soils on site and the groundwater both on site and off site continue to be highly contaminated.

In the mid 1990's some houses in the neighborhood were sampled for vapor contamination. Approximately ten homes were sampled over the next few years, with some evidence of chemical vapors being present. In the fall of 2002, a team consisting of a Region 7 risk assessor and geologist sampled the crawl spaces and indoor air of all houses adjacent to and across from the Chemical Commodities site. Sampling results indicated contamination was present in the majority of homes. Sampling certain houses at different times also indicated a wide range of contamination levels in crawl spaces. Further samples two blocks away from the site also indicated contaminants in indoor air at levels of concern. The ATSDR and EPA concluded that residents of those homes were at increased risk for cancer and non-cancer health effects.

Why we were formed

In 2001 the CCI Citizens Advisory Group was formed to provide community input into the EPA CCI Superfund site located in Olathe, Kansas. The primary concerns of this group are the health and economic well being of our neighborhood. In 2004 the CCI CAG incorporated as a not for profit organization. For decades the neighborhood surrounding this superfund site has endured uncertainty of the health consequences of living near the site and the economic uncertainty of how the EPA superfund site would affect property values. To address these issues CCI Concerned Citizens Group is partnering with: 1) federal, state, and local government officials, 2) the Environmental Protection Agency, and 3) the potentially responsible parties (PRP).

What is a CAG?

A Superfund Community Advisory Group (CAG) is made up of members of the community and is designated to serve as the focal point for the exchange of information among the local community and EPA, the State

regulatory agency, and other pertinent Federal agencies involved in cleanup of the Superfund site. A CAG can assist the EPA in making better decisions on how to clean up a site. It offers the EPA a unique opportunity to hear, and seriously consider, community preferences for site cleanup and remediation.

What is a PRP?

The companies or people that EPA determines may be responsible for contributing to the contamination at Superfund sites are called “Potentially Responsible Parties” or “PRPs”.

EPA conducts a PRP search at each Superfund site to find the potentially responsible parties. EPA’s primary goal in conducting the PRP search is to identify all of the PRPs at a particular Superfund site.

EPA uses the following resources and communication techniques to identify, collect information and communicate with those companies and/or people identified, or considered as PRPs:

- PRP Searches
- Information Request Letters
- Superfund Enforcement Directory

The following companies were determined by the EPA to be the PRPs of the Olathe Superfund site:

- CCI/Jerald Gershon
- US Department of Defense
- Boeing
- Alliant Techsystems, Inc.
- Ashland Chemical Co.
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Co.
- CertainTeed Corp.
- Cordant Technologies
- Hallmark Cards
- Honeywell, Inc. (formerly AlliedSignal)
- Lucent Technologies, Inc.
- Mallinckrodt, Inc.

CCI purchased chemicals from many other companies.