Your Health and Vapor Intrusion
MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (MDH)

Your workplace is in an area where the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is conducting a vapor intrusion investigation.

What is Vapor Intrusion?
Chemicals that have been spilled or dumped on the ground can pollute soil and groundwater. Volatile organic compounds (VOCs) are chemicals that easily evaporate into air. VOCs that evaporate from polluted soil and groundwater can create chemical vapors underground.

If these vapors move and come in contact with a building, they may enter through cracks in the foundation, around pipes, or through a drain system. The VOCs can then contaminate indoor air. This process - when pollution moves from air spaces in soil to indoor air - is called vapor intrusion.

Should I be concerned?
The Sears building is affected by vapor intrusion. Concentrations of the industrial solvent trichloroethylene (TCE) in indoor air are above levels of health concern, especially for women who are pregnant or may become pregnant. Breathing TCE during the first trimester of pregnancy may increase the risk of heart defects to the baby. If you are pregnant or may become pregnant, MDH recommends that you avoid spending time in the building until levels of TCE in indoor air decline.

Other health effects from TCE may occur if people breathe high concentrations of TCE vapors in the air over many years. Please contact MDH if you are concerned about your health.

Questions?
Contact MPCA for questions on the investigation:
Al Timm: 651-757-2786 allan.timm@state.mn.us
Andri Dahlmeier: 651-757-2718 andri.dahlmeier@state.mn.us
https://www.pca.state.mn.us/se-hennepin-vapor-site

Contact MDH for questions about health:
(651) 201-4897 health.hazard@state.mn.us
http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/hazardous/topics/vaporintrusion.html

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To obtain this information in a different format, call 651-201-4897.