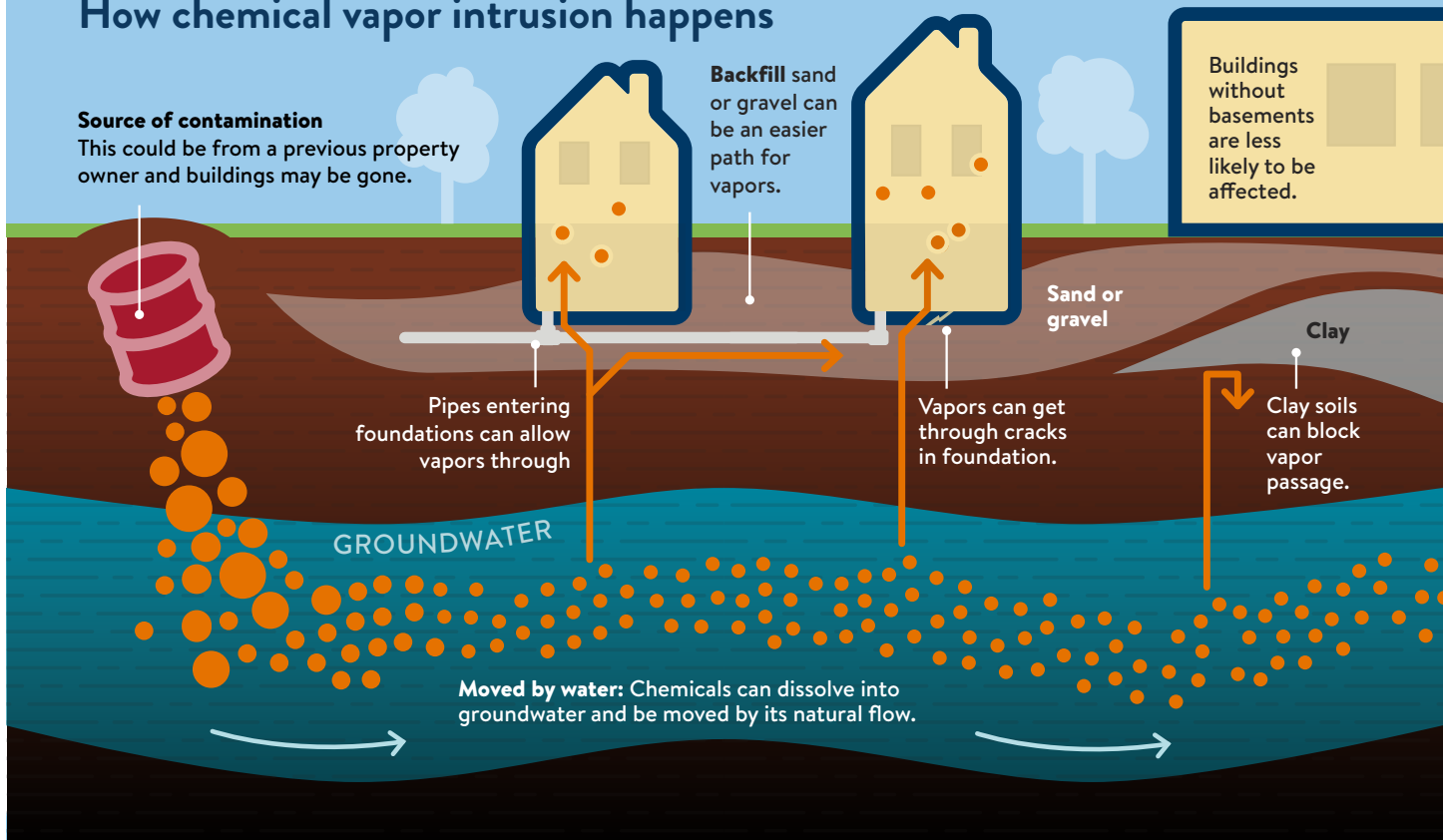


Vapor intrusion | FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

How chemical vapor intrusion happens



What is vapor intrusion?

Vapor intrusion is a process that starts when chemicals are spilled or released into the ground, polluting soil and groundwater. If these chemicals contain volatile organic compounds (VOCs), the VOCs easily evaporate into the air and rise toward the ground surface.

When groundwater moves, these vapors can enter buildings through cracks in the foundation, around pipes, or through a sump or drain system, usually around the basement or floor. The VOCs can then contaminate indoor air.

Why does the MPCA want to do this sampling?

We want to sample your property because it is within the site's area of concern. The area of concern is the area where contamination is identified or suspected.

The amount of chemicals in contaminated vapors that enter buildings typically are not high enough to impact most people's health. However, there may be health concerns when exposure occurs for a long period of time, the amount of chemicals is high, or a sensitive individual is present. See the "Your health and vapor intrusion" handout for more information.

What does sampling involve?

The MPCA has hired a state contractor to collect vapor samples from underneath the floor (called “sub-slab soil vapor sampling”) or ground surface at your building. The building owner or designated representative will need to be present during sampling. A state contractor will need to be let in to install testing equipment and collect samples. The arrangements you make are completely dependent on your availability and comfort level with having people on your property.

The sub-slab soil vapor sampling includes a site walk, drilling holes about 1-inch wide through the floor of the lowest level of your building to install sampling ports, sample collection (which typically takes 1-2 hours), and a second visit to remove the sampling ports.

Indoor air samples may also be collected at the same time as sub-slab soil vapor samples. This type of sampling is also performed during mitigation system verification. The indoor air sampling includes placing a sample canister(s) above the floor surface for 24 hours, and a second visit to remove the canister(s).

How will I get my sample results?

After the samples are collected and analyzed, you will receive a results letter, which will contain a tabulated summary of results, and information on what the results mean. The results will be sent to you via contact information provided on your access agreement.

What if a risk is identified?

If contaminants sampled beneath your building are found to be above MPCA’s sub-slab screening values, building mitigation may be needed to reduce the vapor intrusion risk. Your results letter will inform you about next steps.

Who pays for the sampling and mitigation?

Typically the MPCA will pay for sampling and mitigation at owner-occupied (homesteaded) homes. Mitigation could include a variety of home improvements. Refer to your cover letter/access agreement for more details.

Will I receive a final report?

After all work is complete, a final package, called a Property Summary Report (PSR), which includes a summary of results, details of any mitigation system and associated maintenance, will be sent to you to keep with your property records.

Where can I get more information?

For additional information about soil vapor:
[Managing vapor intrusion | mnpca.info/138](https://mnpca.info/138)



What if I have more questions?

Site investigations, sampling or mitigation systems

Contact MPCA staff identified on the access agreement.

Health-related questions

Contact Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) Site Assessment and Consultation Unit at 651-201-4897 or email health.hazard@state.mn.us.