



# Status for the Former Superior Plating Superfund Site

The Former Superior Plating Superfund Site is currently undergoing remediation of contaminated soil and groundwater at and near its plant in northeast Minneapolis. The work is being done by a voluntary party First and University Investors (FUI) through the Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup (VIC) Program under the oversight and partnership of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) state Superfund Program.

## Facility history

The Superior Plating Company was located at University and First Avenues Northeast in Minneapolis. Built in the 1890s, the building was originally used as a streetcar barn and repair facility. Superior Plating began using part of the building in 1956, expanding to the rest of it in the early 1960s. The building was used for the company's metal-plating operations, in which metal parts were brought to the plant and plated with various other metals.

At first, the plating lines were set up on the building's original wood plank floor. Drips, spills and leaks from the lines passed through the floor and were caught by a system of concrete-lined troughs in the subfloor. Liquid in this system flowed to several sumps and ultimately to the sanitary sewer. It's thought that leaks from these troughs let chemicals seep into the soil and bedrock beneath the building. The company later had better pollution-prevention methods, but contamination remains in the soil and groundwater below and near the building. This contamination has been known about since the early 1980s, when the Minneapolis Community Development Agency conducted an investigation of the site that revealed the presence of metals in soils beneath the building and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and metals in the groundwater.

In the 1980s, Superior Plating began to work with the MPCA to address these problems. The site was placed on the state Superfund list in 1985, with a federal Hazard Ranking Scoring system of 6. This ranking system assigns a number from 1 to 100, indicating the relative risk a site poses, with 1 representing lowest risk and 100 highest.

## Issues at the site?

Superior Plating and the MPCA have identified these issues:

- An area of groundwater (called a "plume") is contaminated with chlorinated solvents, including trichloroethylene (TCE), a common industrial solvent. This contamination is moving slowly with shallow groundwater away from the building toward the southeast. Work is being done to capture the contamination and stabilize the plume including treating it before discharging to the sanitary sewer.
- Several areas of contaminated soil beneath the former building footprint are contaminated with solvents and heavy metals, primarily chromium.
- Because of the concentration of TCE in the groundwater, there is a potential for soil gas (vapors) in the area of the plume.

## What's being done now?

Soils identified exceeding residential soil reference values (SRVs) have been excavated from the site, treated and disposed of. The downgradient groundwater plume continues to be managed & treated by a pump-out well equipped with treatment system. The pump and treat system breaks down TCE to sanitary sewer acceptable levels. The water is then discharged to the sanitary sewer system for final treatment. The system is designed to both treat the water and manage the plume size and downgradient movement. To the north of the site a leachate collection system is in place to intercept contaminated waters leaching from the building footprint and surrounding soils. This leachate system will continue to operate throughout and post-remediation activities.

## What happens next?

The MPCA and FUI are working together to find a compromise to operate the leachate collection system and improve upon it for a more long-term solution. The MPCA is working with BNSF railroad and the city of Minneapolis to obtain access to soils along the University Bridge and railroad right-of-way. The MPCA has made it a priority to identify and investigate the extent and magnitude of potentially contaminated soils in these areas.

Therefore, for its part, the MPCA has agreed to take responsibility for any contaminated media outside the property boundaries, and to continue to maintain and operate the groundwater systems, if necessary, after five years post remediation of the site.

The MPCA has worked diligently to assist FUI through this remediation project. However, human health and the environment will always be the MPCA's priority and the agency will continue to oversee the remediation of the Former Superior Plating Superfund Site with those priorities in mind.

## For more information

Reporters, who have questions or would like more information about the Superior Plating site, should contact Pamela McCurdy, MPCA Public Information Officer (phone 651-757-2559, email [pamela.mccurdy@state.mn.us](mailto:pamela.mccurdy@state.mn.us)).

You can find information about this site also on the MPCA's Superior Plating Superfund Site webpage at <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/jsri10a1>.

