

If you have general questions or would like additional information regarding the site, please contact one of the following:

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For more information on the Cornell-Dubilier Electronics Superfund site, visit:
www.epa.gov/superfund/cornell-dubilier

Site Status

In March 2020, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) removed trees and vegetation adjacent to the former Cornell-Dubilier Electronics, Inc. (CDE) property as part of the cleanup work. Over the next 20 months beginning in August 2020, EPA will excavate and dispose of contaminated soil offsite and relocate a 36-inch waterline that crosses the former CDE property. Temporary trailers, soil staging areas, equipment deliveries, storage containers, and constructing a temporary groundwater treatment plant are all a part of the preparation activities currently underway. Prior to shipping the soil offsite, it will be placed in staging areas that will be covered, as needed, to control dust and prevent runoff of storm water.

Debris from capacitors containing polychlorinated biphenyls (PCB) will also be excavated and disposed of offsite as part of the soil cleanup. The capacitor debris area, which has been contributing to PCB contamination in the Bound Brook sediments, is located along the eastern bank of the Bound Brook that is adjacent to the former CDE property. Following these activities, EPA will relocate a waterline along public roads and through the recently excavated and remediated portions of the capacitor debris area.

EPA and its contractors are working closely with the Borough of South Plainfield to answer any concerns about the upcoming activities. Residents living near the work area may hear noise or feel vibrations similar to those activities from other construction projects such as road work or building demolition and construction. When the waterline work begins on the public roads, residents may also experience increased traffic. Some site workers may be dressed in protective clothing to keep contaminated soil off their clothes, or wear dust masks, but this does not indicate a risk to residents. Air monitoring and dust suppression practices will be used to protect residents and businesses from the potential release of contaminants from the work areas. New and existing fencing will be maintained.

As we continue to adjust to the evolving COVID-19 situation, EPA is taking necessary steps to ensure that decisions about ongoing cleanup activities at Superfund sites are made with the health and safety of communities, EPA staff, state and tribal partners, and contractors are the priority.

EPA's contractors are implementing health and safety plans specific to preventing the spread of the COVID-19 virus during these activities. These plans require best practices for site safety, including face covering, gloves and other appropriate personal protective equipment for employees, temperature checks of employees, tracking-employees who might be ill and social distancing. EPA is monitoring site operations and contractor's health and safety practices.

It's important to know that EPA maintains its ability to respond to environmental emergencies at Superfund sites, or in any situation where we are called upon to protect human health and the environment by responding to releases of chemical, oil, radiological, biological, and other hazardous materials.

Background

The CDE site is located in South Plainfield, New Jersey and is comprised of a 26-acre property formerly owned by CDE, several adjacent residential, commercial and municipal properties, and the adjoining Bound Brook corridor. Between 1936 and 1962, the company operated a facility on the property and manufactured electronic components. Poor waste handling practices resulted in releases of PCBs and chlorinated volatile organic compounds (VOCs), primarily trichloroethylene (TCE), which resulted in the contamination of soil, sediments, and groundwater at the CDE site.

During a series of site investigations starting in the late 1990s, VOCs and PCBs were detected in the soil, groundwater, and interiors of buildings at the former CDE property; on nearby residential, commercial, and municipal properties; in the sediments and surface water of Bound Brook, which is adjacent to the southeast corner of the former CDE property; and in groundwater at the former CDE property. The CDE site was added to the National Priorities List in July 1998.

EPA is addressing the CDE site in multiple stages directed at cleaning the entire site and has divided it into phases, or operable units (OUs), due to the complexity and size of the site. OU1 addresses properties in the vicinity of the former CDE property. OU2 refers to the remediation of the 25-acre former CDE property. OU3 and OU4 focus on the contaminated groundwater and contaminated sediments in the Bound Brook.

The final planned action, which is OU4, addresses contamination within the Bound Brook. The Bound Brook passes adjacent to the former CDE property and has been impacted by CDE's waste disposal practices. Soil has eroded from the former CDE property to the brook, and contaminated groundwater beneath the former property. To determine the nature and extent of contamination within the Bound Brook, a 2013 Remedial Investigation was conducted on a 10-mile stretch of the Bound Brook starting as far east as the Talmadge Bridge, extending west past the confluence of the Bound Brook and Green Brook and ending approximately one mile downstream from Green Brook. The investigation included sampling sediment, flood plain soil, and groundwater within the Bound Brook corridor, and included sampling of surface water and biota (fish and clams).

In May 2015, EPA selected a remedy for OU4 that consisted of four phases. Phase 1 involves excavating and disposing offsite PCB capacitor debris along the eastern bank of the Bound Brook that is adjacent to the former CDE property which has been contributing PCB contamination to the Bound Brook sediments. Phase 2 addresses the relocation of a 36-inch waterline that cuts across the former CDE property. Phase 3 addresses contaminated groundwater that is currently being released into the Bound Brook from the former CDE property. The phase 3 remedy calls for groundwater capture and treatment along the boundary of the former CDE property and the Bound Brook to prevent the release of groundwater contaminants. During Phase 4, contaminated sediment and floodplain soil will be excavated and removed along a three-mile stretch of the Bound Brook. New Market Pond will also be dredged.

Three of the four remedial designs for OU4 have been completed – capacitor debris area, waterline relocation, and groundwater capture. The groundwater containment system is currently operational. The remaining phase, which is the sediment removal from the Bound Brook and soil removal from the Bound Brook flood plain, is to follow.