

# TCE in the Air

## Trichloroethylene (TCE) health effects and actions you can take to protect your home's air

TCE is a man-made chemical used to clean metal in some factories and is found in some household items like paint, spot removers, and varnishes. If spilled, it can stay in the ground for a long time.

### Why should I care?

- It can enter your home through cracks in the floor or walls of your basement, and other openings.
- It evaporates quickly and breathing the vapors is not healthy.
- It can cause cancer if you breathe it over a long period of time.

### Who has more risk?

Babies whose mother's breathe in TCE while pregnant can have:

- Lower birth weights
- Heart defects
- Nervous or immune system problems

### What if TCE is in my community?

If there is a known concern, environmental health professionals will ask to check your home to make sure there is no TCE inside.

They need your permission to drill in your basement and test.

If they find high levels of TCE, they will suggest that you have a special system installed to fix the problem.

### Do I have to pay?

The people responsible for the spill will probably have to pay for the testing and any repairs that have to be made.

A "sub-slab mitigation" system moves air from below to outside the house.



### What else can I do?

- Wear protective gloves if you use products with TCE (like paint remover).
- Use only small amounts of products containing TCE.
- Use the chemical in well-ventilated areas.
- Do not stay in the room for long periods of time if you can smell the chemical while using it or after using it.

### Where can I learn more?

- [Vapor Intrusion 101 \(video\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izo0QKqCToU):  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=izo0QKqCToU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izo0QKqCToU)
- [Vapor Intrusion Investigation — Information Sheet for Neighbors](https://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/rr/RR067.pdf):  
<https://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/rr/RR067.pdf>
- [Why Test for Vapor Intrusion?](https://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/rr/RR953.pdf):  
<https://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/rr/RR953.pdf>
- [Mitigation: Protection from Vapor Intrusion](https://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/rr/RR094.pdf):  
<https://dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/rr/RR094.pdf>

