

Owens Corning Starr/Anderson, South Carolina Groundwater Evaluation

Frequently Asked Questions

This document shares information with Anderson County residents about the ongoing groundwater evaluation at the Owens Corning facility located at 4837 Highway 81 South in Starr, South Carolina.

If you have additional questions, please contact **Owens Corning at 1.800.853.6621** or visit <http://andersoninvolvementplan.com/>. Questions may also be directed to **Matt Robbins** with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) at **404.562.8371**, or by e-mail at **Robbins.Matt@epamail.epa.gov** or **Stephanie Smith-Strack** with the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) at **864.260.5569**, or by e-mail at **smiths3@dhec.sc.gov**.

1. Where has contaminated soil and water been found?

In 1988, Owens Corning began the process of investigating contaminated soil and groundwater on its property. In 2009, contamination was also detected off-site, roughly one-half mile to the northeast of the Owens Corning facility, in the deep groundwater aquifer under Betsy Creek. *No contamination has been detected in residential water wells and the public water supply has not been impacted.*

2. What contaminants have been found in the soil and water?

- The chemical that has been found is 1,1-Dichloroethene (DCE). 1,1-DCE is a Volatile Organic Compound (VOC) that results from the breakdown of 1,1,1-trichloroethane (TCA). TCA is an industrial chemical that was once used at the Owens Corning facility. 1,1-DCE has been found on Owens Corning property and deep in the groundwater aquifer *under* Betsy Creek, many feet below the ground/soil surface and any known residential wells. While 1,1 DCE was detected in Betsy Creek at levels that exceed safe drinking water standards, the creek is not classified as a drinking water source.

It is important to know that:

- **1,1-DCE has not been found in any of 28 residential wells that have been sampled;**
- **The public water supply as not been impacted;** and
- **There is no indication that exposure to Betsy Creek (through swimming, playing in the water, etc.) presents a risk to residents.**

3. Is the water near the Owens Corning facility safe to use and drink?

Sampling conducted in since 1988 on 28 residential wells located up to two miles from the plant did not show any chemicals associated with manufacturing operations at the Owens Corning facility. Based on these results, there is no reason to believe that residents are currently exposed to soil or deep groundwater contamination from Owens Corning's plant. However, drinking water wells should not be drilled into the deep aquifer below Betsy Creek without prior consultation with DHEC.

4. Is the public water supply in Starr/Anderson at risk?

No. The public water supply (water provided by the Starr/Anderson municipalities) has not been affected by the groundwater contamination.

5. Is it safe to handle the soil located near the Owens Corning property?

Yes. Soil contamination occurred *only* on the Owens Corning property.

6. Have any residents reported health problems as a result of the contamination?

No. Neither Owens Corning, EPA nor DHEC are aware of, or have received, any reports of health problems from residents.

7. Where is the groundwater being tested?

Current groundwater testing is continuing on Owens Corning property and off-site on private property through the monitoring of water wells located north and east of the facility. These wells are located deep in the groundwater, in some cases more than 300 feet below the ground, in and around the areas where contamination has been found.

8. How many residential wells have been sampled so far? Who is eligible to have their well water sampled?

Twenty-eight (28) residential wells located up to two miles from the Owens Corning facility have been sampled. If residents have concerns about their water they should contact Owens Corning to discuss their specific situation.

9. How frequently is groundwater being tested? How long will testing continue?

Groundwater is tested on a routine schedule that is determined by Owens Corning, EPA and DHEC. Currently, the testing is conducted once every three months. Groundwater testing and/or monitoring will continue as long as deemed necessary to protect the health and safety of Anderson County residents.

10. Who is overseeing the groundwater testing?

EPA and DHEC have oversight of the testing being conducted by Owens Corning.

11. Is the groundwater contamination getting worse and/or expected to spread?

Ongoing investigation and monitoring is continuing to determine if contamination is spreading or worsening. It is a very positive sign that repeat sampling (conducted over the course of many years) of 28 residential wells located up to two miles from the plant have *not* shown any chemicals associated with manufacturing operations at the Owens Corning facility. Owens Corning will continue to monitor on a regular basis and is taking steps to prevent any future movement of chemicals from the Owens Corning facility into the groundwater.

12. How will Owens Corning fix this problem?

Owens Corning is installing a cleanup measure that involves pumping and treating contaminated groundwater at the facility boundary. This cleanup measure is scheduled to be implemented by late 2010 will prevent any further contamination from moving off the facility property and will begin removing existing contamination from the groundwater.

13. How did this happen?

The contamination occurred when an in-ground disposal pit on the Owens Corning property leaked chemicals into the groundwater and soil. The disposal pit was used many years ago and has since been closed.

14. How can I learn more?

Owens Corning is hosting a community meeting to discuss the groundwater evaluation and cleanup project with residents and community leaders. Staff from Owens Corning, EPA and DHEC will be available at the meeting to share additional information and answer questions. The meeting will be held on **September 13, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.** at Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, 4909 Highway 81 South, Starr, South Carolina 29684. For additional information, residents can contact Owens Corning at 1.800.853.6621 or visit <http://andersoninvolvementplan.com/>.

###