

# AIR QUALITY FACT SHEET

## Why Are We Asking To Test Your Indoor Air Quality?

The City of Wichita is working the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) on groundwater issues within the north central part of Wichita. These groundwater issues were caused by industries in the North Industrial Corridor area and typically include chemicals such as degreasers that manufacturers and dry cleaners have leaked or were spilled onto the ground and eventually ended up in the groundwater. Although your home/building may not be near an industrial facility or a dry cleaner, the groundwater generally moves toward the south and the groundwater pollution moves with it. Sometimes, “vapors” are released from the polluted groundwater into the overlying soils. The KDHE and the City are working on a study to determine if any vapors may eventually enter your home/building by conducting this indoor air testing. If vapors do enter your home/building, it is called “vapor intrusion.”

## What Is Vapor Intrusion?

As shown in the sketch, vapor intrusion occurs when chemicals move as a vapor from polluted groundwater or soils into air inside a building. Vapor intrusion may occur in any type of building: old or new, home or business, and buildings with a basement, crawl space, or slab on grade construction. The vapors may enter the building through various ways such as cracks in the foundation or holes where utilities enter the building.



## Why Should I Volunteer?

The tests will help determine if vapor intrusion is occurring in your home/business. The City is only able to perform a limited number of tests so it's important to volunteer and schedule your test quickly. In general, vapor intrusion poses no immediate risk and does not generally cause immediately serious health effects. Many of us are exposed to high concentrations of chemical vapors at our jobs for short periods of time. However, long-term exposure to even low concentrations of chemical vapors can increase the chance of health problems.

## How Is Vapor Intrusion Measured?

In this study the City is focusing on sampling indoor air to evaluate any potential that vapor intrusion is occurring. The potential for vapor intrusion to occur in a home/building is measured by collecting indoor air samples and also air samples from around the neighborhood and other locations. The air samples provide a snapshot of the air quality around and inside the building to create an understanding of the amount of vapors that may be entering the building from the groundwater or soils (i.e., vapor intrusion).

## What is the Process for Air Testing?

Volunteer homes/buildings will be checked before testing to locate all sources of chemicals such as household cleaners, paints, glues, and similar materials used for hobbies. Locations and amounts of dry cleaned clothes will also be noted. These chemicals can affect the test and may cause a false test result. Activities that occur at the job or outside the home/building but that may leave a residue on people, clothes, or materials brought into the home/building should also be noted.

It takes only a few minutes for staff to set up an air sampler. A return visit will be scheduled for staff to retrieve the sampler. The sampler will then be submitted to a laboratory for evaluation. Test results can be compared to health risk values set by the KDHE. If results from the air tested in the volunteer homes/buildings show the vapors from one or more chemicals in amounts greater than the health risk values, additional testing or other steps may be necessary.

## Where Can I Find More Information?

For more information on vapor intrusion, please reference the KDHE's webpage at [http://www.kdheks.gov/remedial/vapor\\_intrusion.html](http://www.kdheks.gov/remedial/vapor_intrusion.html).

