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# Former Chemical Plant Buildings Demolished

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## BASF Site

Cleveland, Ohio

January 2016

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### For more information

For questions, comments or more information about the environmental activities at the BASF site in Cleveland, contact U.S. EPA and U.S. Army Corps staff:

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BASF Corp. tore down five old and damaged buildings on its property at 1000 Harvard Ave. in 2015 as part of an ongoing cleanup project being overseen by U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The foundations will remain in place until BASF finishes site cleanup.

BASF followed best management practices for dust control and water management while it was tearing down the buildings. The Ohio Department of Health checked the air at the property boundaries for radioactive particles and found no issues. BASF sent contaminated building debris to landfills as required. The company will crush the clean bricks and concrete to use as fill around the location.

The remaining buildings on the property are the water treatment plant, a field trailer and a Quonset hut. The treatment plant filters contaminated groundwater from the western portion of the property that has high levels of nickel. The treated water flows in a pipe to the city wastewater treatment plant.

The site has 24-hour security. In early 2016, BASF will build a new fence along Harvard Avenue for added security. One part of the property is owned by the Chevron Corp. and is under the exclusive jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps demolished Building G-1 on that part of the site in early 2015.



*Site of the former Foundry Building, torn down in October 2015.*

The BASF property is 3.5 miles south of downtown Cleveland on the western shore of the Cuyahoga River, at the mouth of Big Creek. See maps at

<http://www3.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/rcra/basf/index.html>

## History

From 1903 to 1998, various businesses produced chemicals at the property, including the former Harshaw Chemical Co. BASF purchased the property in 2006 when it bought out another company but never used the site.

In 2010, U.S. EPA ordered BASF to investigate and clean up chemical contamination at the property. U.S. EPA's authority comes from a federal law called the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, or RCRA. RCRA is our nation's main law covering the handling of solid and hazardous waste. U.S. EPA issued the 2010 order to BASF under the RCRA law. The federal Agency's Corrective Action program oversees compliance with RCRA orders.

There are more than 3,700 RCRA Corrective Action sites in the country, including over 250 in Ohio. The federal or state Corrective Action programs oversee the sites.

## Army Corps jurisdiction

In the 1940's and 1950's, Harshaw Chemical researched and processed uranium for the Defense Department's Manhattan Project (atomic bomb development). The site has radiological contamination due to the project.

In 1999, Congress included the site in a program that is responsible for managing radiation contamination at places used by the Manhattan Project and Atomic Energy Commission. The program, called the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program, or FUSRAP, is administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

U.S. EPA is coordinating with the Corps to oversee the cleanup of chemical and radiological contamination at the location to make it safe for a new use. Each agency is working on the environmental issues under its authority.

## Investigation and cleanup

BASF started by tearing down the buildings and doing some soil sampling in safe areas. Because the soil is sampled using a drill rig, it was not safe to take samples near the buildings.

With these additional buildings now removed, BASF will collect soil and groundwater samples on the rest of the property under EPA oversight, in spring 2016. "Groundwater" is an environmental

term for underground supplies of fresh water. BASF will sample and test soil, buried waste, waste piles, groundwater, and the Cuyahoga River and Big Creek for possible contamination.

When BASF completes the investigation, U.S. EPA will decide how BASF should clean up the location to make it safe for redevelopment.

BASF plans to prepare the site for light commercial use and green space such as a public trail along the river.



*Site of former Warehouse Building  
along Harvard Avenue, torn down in  
December 2015*



*Site of former Boiler House Building,  
torn down in October 2015*