

Former Gopher Ordnance Works

MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH (MDH)

The Minnesota Pollution Control Agency asked MDH to review environmental data for the former Gopher Ordnance Works site and evaluate potential public health concerns.

The site, located in the city of Rosemount and Empire Township in Dakota County, was built and operated by the federal government during World War II for the production of smokeless gunpowder. The University of Minnesota (University) bought portions of the property in 1947-1948. The University and their tenants have used the property for various purposes since that time. Physical and chemical hazards are present at the site due to past uses of the property.

How has MDH been involved?

In 2014, MDH wrote a draft Public Health Assessment (PHA) for the site that offers recommendations intended to protect public health. Main conclusions of the PHA are below:

- Physical hazards are the most important public health hazard on the site.
- Contaminated surface soil poses a concern in limited areas.
- There is not enough information to determine if soils pose a health hazard in some areas.
- Additional evaluation is needed to ensure groundwater contamination is not a hazard.

What has been done since?

The University has taken numerous steps to reduce hazards at the site and collect additional data in response to MDH's recommendations in the PHA.

What are MDH's next steps?

- Review all actions taken and site data collected from 2014-2017.
- Write a report that summarizes actions taken since the draft PHA was released in 2014. The report will provide updated conclusions and recommendations to reflect the current situation.
- Respond to public comments for the draft PHA in the new report.

Questions?

Contact MDH Site Assessment and Consultation Unit:

Call (651) 201-4897 or Email health.hazard@state.mn.us
<http://www.health.state.mn.us/divs/eh/hazardous/topics/vaporintrusion.html>