



1,2,3-TCP ("TCP") F.A.Q.

What is TCP?

TCP is a chemical that was an unnecessary impurity in soil fumigants used by farmers from the 1950's to the 1980's. After being applied to the ground over many years, TCP has migrated down into our aquifer, and has been detected in several Hughson wells at concentrations above the new State Maximum Contaminant Level. Because the fumigants that contained TCP were widely used in this region, TCP groundwater contamination is a widespread problem affecting many communities here in Stanislaus County and throughout the San Joaquin Valley. The manufacturers of the fumigants that contained TCP – Shell Oil Company and Dow Chemical Company – could have removed TCP from their products but chose not to in order to save money. They also never disclosed that TCP was an ingredient, so neither farmers nor regulators knew this kind of contamination could result from using these products. Communities in our area, like Hughson, are now left to deal with the consequences.

Will TCP in the water make me sick? Is the water safe to drink?

The experts at the State Water Resources Control Board, Division Drinking Water (DDW) say that, while the TCP levels in our water do not pose a health emergency and there is no need to use an alternative (e.g., bottled) water supply, some people who drink water containing TCP over many years may have an increased risk of getting cancer, based on studies of laboratory animals. If you have additional questions about TCP and your health, you should contact DDW at (209) 948-7696.

What is the City of Hughson doing about TCP?

The City has completed a feasibility study of treatment options for TCP, and is now developing a plan for installing treatment to remove TCP from the water. The City is currently soliciting proposals from engineers for the design of the treatment facilities and is also actively seeking funding to help pay for the treatment. In addition, Hughson has filed a lawsuit against the manufacturers of the TCP. The purpose of the lawsuit is to make sure the responsible parties, not our ratepayers, pay for the costs of the treatment, which will be substantial. We expect the problem to be solved within the next 3 years.