



# ***Facts About...***

Essex Industrial Chemicals  
(Non-Master List MD-538)

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## **Site Location**

The Essex Industrial Chemicals site is located in Fairfield at 3520 Fairfield Road in Baltimore City, Maryland. Vista Chemical Company, FMC Corporation, and Alcolac International, Inc. are other industries in close proximity to the site.

## **Site History**

Prior to 1934, the property was owned by a company that produced vinegar. Other operations may have occurred on the site during that time, but further information is not available in the file. In 1934, the facility was owned and operated by the Minerec Corporation, which produced copper mining chemicals (thiodicarbonic acid ester, dithiophosphates, and xanthates) used as flotation agents. As of 1987, these products were still produced at the facility. In the 1970s, the Minerec Corporation was acquired by the Anglo Corporation, and in 1979, the facility was acquired by Essex Chemical Corporation. During the 1970s, the Minerec Corporation expanded product lines to include chloroformates, among others. Phosgene was also generated and was used as an intermediate in the production of all chloroformate compounds. The facility also has a hazardous waste treatment facility known as the Decomp Station, which is used to decompose certain waste residues of chloroformates.

Historic spills on the property reportedly have been minor, and consisted of diethyl carbonate, caustic solution, and carbon disulfide. Several underground storage tanks exist on the property for storage of raw material and product.

File documents suggest that Essex Industrial Chemicals closed in approximately 1989.

## **Environmental Investigations**

A June 1987 Groundwater Investigation report, which included sampling of monitoring wells 1-5, shows carbon disulfide and acetone in the groundwater (1,900 and 16,000 parts per billion [ppb], respectively), with lesser amounts of other organic compounds, including ketones. Ketones were not handled on-site; however, it is possible that ketones are a decomposition product of alcohols. Low concentrations of chlorinated compounds were also detected, but the source is not clear.

In 1988, a Consent Order was signed by the Maryland Department of the Environment and Essex Industrial Chemicals, Inc. Its purpose was to present a structured groundwater and soil investigation agreed upon by both parties, to be carried out by Essex Industrial Chemicals.

In early 1989, a soil-gas survey was conducted, revealing the presence of relatively low hydrocarbon levels at the site. The analytes detected above their detection limits were carbon disulfide, methyl isobutyl ketone, acetone, methylene chloride, methyl butyl ketone, toluene, methyl ethyl ketone, benzene, ethylbenzene, and



chlorobenzene. Various combinations of these compounds were detected near such locations as the railroad spur, drum shed, dumpster pad, refrigerator building, and the lab.

Later in 1989, four additional shallow wells were installed (Monitoring Wells 6-9). The wells were sampled during the summer of 1989 and several volatile organic compounds (VOCs) and semi-volatile organic compounds were detected (benzoic acid up to 32,000 ppb in one well). In general, ethers, phenols, and phthalates were detected, as well as carbon disulfide and other VOCs, possibly originating from off-site. Potential off-site contaminant sources include Vista Chemical Company, FMC Corporation, and Alcolac International, Inc.

A Preliminary Assessment was conducted in May 2006. The PA summarized the previous studies discussed above and recommended that additional investigation be conducted in order to provide current information on the groundwater.

On August 27, 2007 the MDE Voluntary Cleanup Program issued a “No Further Requirements Determination” for the site after the latest round of monitoring well sampling did not identify elevated levels of contamination.

### **Current Status**

The property is currently the location of Mid-States Oil Refining Company. Mid-States operations include petroleum storage facilities and trucking operations.

### **Contact**

Kim Lemaster

Maryland Department of the Environment  
Federal Superfund Division

(410) 537-3440

**Last Update:** 9/04/08