

**MD-326  
Howard County**

WESTVACO purchased the 35.5- acre site in February 1964 to establish paper product research and development facility.

In December 1987, MDE personnel discovered drums in wooded area on site.

In January 1989, connection to Howard County municipal water supply and treatment systems was completed.

In February 1989, the settling tanks, dry wells, and leach fields were removed.

In November 1989, MDE completed a Preliminary Assessment.

EPA designated the site as "No Further Remedial Action Planned" in January 1996.

**WESTVACO  
Laurel, Maryland**

**Site Location**

WESTVACO is situated at 11101 Johns Hopkins Road in Laurel, Howard County, Maryland. The Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory is situated to the north across Johns Hopkins Road and farmland surrounds the rest of the site. Water wells and the storage tower that used to supply the facility are located southwest of the plant.

**Site History**

WESTVACO purchased the site in February 1964 from the farmland estate of Scott Brown and established a paper product research and development facility. Numerous hazardous wastes in very small quantities are generated and stored at the site.

Initially, effluent from plant operations flowed to a treatment site south of the plant buildings, which consisted of three settling tanks with an overflow system into five dry wells that allowed wastes to accumulate for removal.

In 1984, a series of ditches located approximately ten feet underground were installed to bypass the dry wells when their ability to drain and percolate fluids was lost due to build up of solids contained in the waste stream.

In 1988, WESTVACO was issued a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit allowing discharge into the county sewer system. The facility connected to the Howard County municipal supply and wastewater treatment systems in January 1989.

The dry wells, settlings tanks, ditches, and leach field effluent disposal system were removed in February 1989. A storm water management pond now occupies the former wastewater disposal area.

The facility plans to abandon existing wells as they now only serve as back-up for potential emergencies.

**Environmental Investigations**

In December 1987, the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) personnel took samples from the water supply wells on site as a part of WESTVACO's wastewater permitting process. The chlorinated solvent tetrachloroethene (PCE) was detected above U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Risk-Based Concentration (RBC) and Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL). Chloroform was detected above the RBC only. At that time, drums were discovered in the wooded area between the waste storage building and the water supply wells and were suspected to have contributed to the PCE contamination in the groundwater.

An Environmental Priorities Initiative/Preliminary Assessment by MDE in November 1989 found that the drums were removed and recommended the site for "Further Remedial Action Planned" status by EPA.

In January 1996, EPA designated the site as "No Further Remedial Action Planned."

**Current Status**

Under a Cooperative Agreement with the EPA Superfund Program, the MDE is conducting a site survey of the WESTVACO site. The Site Survey Initiative was proposed to reassess the status of those sites that were previously designated No Further Remedial Action Planned by the EPA. This initiative is intended to determine if site conditions have remained stable, provide a current description of the site, and identify and address any new pathways for contamination. The initiative is also intended to determine whether the State should recommend further investigation by the EPA, oversight by the State and no further investigation by the EPA, or no further action be taken by the EPA or the State and the State designate the site as a "Formerly Investigated Site."

***Site Contact***

[Art O'Connell](#)

Maryland Department of the Environment  
Site and Brownfields Assessments/State Superfund  
Division

(410) 537-3493