

Perchloroethylene: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Issues Draft Risk Evaluation



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The United States Environmental Protection Agency (“EPA”) issued a draft risk evaluation (“Draft”) for perchloroethylene (“PERC”).

EPA concludes that risks identified in the Draft, including those associated with the chemical’s use in dry cleaning, do not require action.

PERC is a man-made chemical that can be a liquid or gas. It is also called tetrachloroethylene or tetrachloroethene. The primary use for PERC has been in dry cleaning activities. However, it has also been used for metal degreasing and general anesthesia.

EPA states in announcing the Draft that it reviewed 68 conditions of use. The federal agency stated that in preparing the Draft it:

- Reviewed scientific literature
- Conducted modeling and other risk assessment activities
- Collected exposure, fate and transport information from sources
- Reviewed current uses of the chemical
- Reviewed the chemical’s fate, transport, and toxicity
- Considered whether the chemical’s relevant conditions of use could pose an unreasonable risk of injury to human health and the environment

The Draft preliminarily found an unreasonable risk to workers, occupational non-users, consumers, bystanders, and the environment from certain uses. The primary health risk stated to have been identified in the Draft was neurological effects from short- and long-term exposure to the chemical. Further, EPA notes:

The risk to consumers from this chemical’s use in dry cleaning is from skin exposure to items cleaned with perchloroethylene. The agency also found environmental risks to aquatic organisms. It is important to remember that these initial determinations are not EPA’s final determinations on whether this chemical presents unreasonable risks under the conditions of use.

The Draft also addresses:

- Using products Safely
- Public Participation, Peer Review, and Next Steps
- Supporting Documents

A link to the 636-page Draft can be found [here](#).

