

Scorecard

THE POLLUTION INFORMATION SITE

Investigate Pollution Topics

TOXICS

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- ▶ Superfund

AIR

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WATER

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ZIP TO YOUR COMMUNITY

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[POLLUTION LOCATOR](#) | The U.S. Toxics Release Inventory

The Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) collects information about chemical releases and waste management reported by major industrial facilities in the U.S. The TRI database was established by Section 313 of the Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act of 1986. Under EPCRA, industrial facilities in specific sectors are required to report their environmental releases and waste management practices annually to the Environmental Protection Agency. Covered facilities must disclose their releases of approximately 650 toxic chemicals to air, water, and land, as well as the quantities of chemicals they recycle, treat, burn, or otherwise dispose of on-site and off-site.

Scorecard's 2002 TRI data are derived from the reports of almost 20,000 industrial facilities. Seven "new" industries (e.g., metal mining, electric utilities, commercial hazardous waste treatment) were required to report their release and waste management data for the first time in 1998, substantially increasing the total amount of chemicals tracked by TRI. NOTE: Recent changes in reporting requirements affect Scorecard's [calculation of trends](#) in TRI release categories.

The specific types of environmental releases, transfers and waste generation reported to TRI are explained by Scorecard's [Definitions of Toxics Release Inventory Reporting Categories](#).

THE LIMITS OF TRI DATA

While TRI is the most comprehensive national source of information about toxic chemical releases, it has critical limitations:

- 1) TRI **may significantly underreport releases**, because companies use unreliable emissions factors to estimate their releases, rather than monitor their actual emissions. Issues impacting the quality of TRI data are explained in [How Reliable Are TRI Data?](#)
- 2) TRI [does not cover all toxic chemicals](#) that have the potential to adversely affect human health or the environment.
- 3) TRI [does not require reporting from many major sources](#) of pollution releases.
- 4) TRI [does not require companies to report the quantities of toxic chemicals used](#) or the amounts that remain in products.

5) TRI [does not provide information about the exposures](#) people may experience as a consequence of chemical use.

SCORECARD'S SOURCE FOR TRI DATA

Scorecard's TRI data are derived from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's [2002 public data release](#) (released in July 2004).

RELATED WEBSITES

U.S. EPA Toxics Release Inventory: Community Right-to-Know Homepage

<http://www.epa.gov/tri/>

[EPA's Key Findings about 2002 Toxic Releases](#)

U.S. EPA Envirofacts Warehouse Toxics Release Inventory: TRI Overview

<http://www.epa.gov/enviro/html/tris/>

RTK Net: The Right-to-Know Network

<http://d1.rtknet.org/tri/>

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