

Raytheon & Air Force Face EPA Fines for Water Contamination in Tucson

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency chastised Tucson-based **Raytheon Co.** and the **U.S. Air Force** on Friday for continued contamination near a water treatment center serving 50,000 people.

The plume of contaminated groundwater was found near the Tucson International Airport Area Superfund Site, where Raytheon and the Air Force share a 1,365-acre facility called Air Force Plant 44.

Water samples collected there in 2006 found high amounts of trichloroethylene and dioxane. Some TCE test samples were as high as 3,400 parts per billion, and DX levels were as high as 298 parts per billion. EPA officials will require the company and the Air Force to reduce TCE and DX to 5 parts and 3 parts per billion, respectively.

"Ensuring the safety of our drinking water is one of the EPA's top priorities," said Alexis Strauss, Pacific Southwest regional director of the EPA's Water Division. "We are focused on reducing the impact of past and present contamination, and ensuring Tucson will continue to have a clean drinking-water source while protecting groundwater."

The contaminants migrated north of the facility and into a water treatment plant that provides drinking water for 50,000 residents.

The plant treats water for those contaminants, making it safe for residents to drink. Still, the EPA wants Raytheon and the Air Force to clean up their collective act, requiring them to improve their extraction and treatment system. If they do not follow the order, the EPA will fine both entities up to \$32,500 a day.

EPA officials said the site has a 50-year history of contamination from aircraft, unlined landfills and electronic facilities. Since 1951, Raytheon (formerly Hughes Aircraft) has disposed of numerous metals and chlorinated solvents at the facility, the EPA found.

Raytheon stopped using TCE in the 1970s. It had been used as an industrial solvent and was found in many degreasing substances. The EPA considers the contaminant a probable human carcinogen that affects the liver, kidney, immune and endocrine systems.

DX, used to enhance solvents, also is considered a probable human carcinogen by the EPA.

