



**Environmental Investigation and Cleanup  
ExxonMobil Torrance Oil Refinery  
3700 West 190<sup>th</sup> Street, Torrance, California**

**Si necesita información en Español, por favor llame a la línea libre de cargos 213.576.6745**

**Introduction**

This fact sheet has been prepared to update the community on the environmental investigation being conducted at ExxonMobil's Torrance Oil Refinery, located at 3700 West 190<sup>th</sup> Street, in Torrance, California (Site).

This fact sheet reports on the ongoing indoor air quality and soil vapor testing being conducted along Del Amo Boulevard between Van Ness Avenue and Crenshaw Boulevard. Environmental investigations have found portions of this area have methane gas and petroleum hydrocarbons, including benzene, in the soil and soil vapor (air spaces between soil particles) at levels that have the *potential* to cause adverse health impacts.

In this fact sheet you will find information on the:

- Refinery Location and Environmental Investigation
- Status of the Investigation of Indoor Air Quality and Soil Vapor
- Supplemental Indoor Air and Soil Vapor Testing
- Community Involvement
- Information Repositories
- Contact Information

All environmental work being performed at the Site is under the direction of the California Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Water Board), with support from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC). Both the Regional Water Board and DTSC are part of the California Environmental Protection Agency.

*Indoor air results are below levels of concern.* Based on tests recently conducted in nine homes in the

neighborhood, indoor air quality was similar to ambient (outdoor) air quality and did not exceed levels of concern for methane or benzene. At any time should this determination change, appropriate protective action will be taken by the regulatory agencies.

*Your drinking water is safe.* The contaminated groundwater is not used for drinking water purposes. The City of Torrance obtains its drinking water from other sources. Your drinking water is tested regularly to ensure it meets all federal and state drinking water standards before it is delivered to your home.

**Refinery Location and Environmental Investigation**

The Torrance Refinery is located at 3700 West 190<sup>th</sup> Street in Torrance, California. The refinery covers approximately 750 acres and was built in 1929. The refinery manufactures, stores, and transports various petroleum products, including gasoline, jet fuel, diesel, petroleum coke and sulfur. Currently, the refinery processes an average of 149,000 barrels of crude oil per day and produces 1.8 billion gallons of petroleum fuels per year.

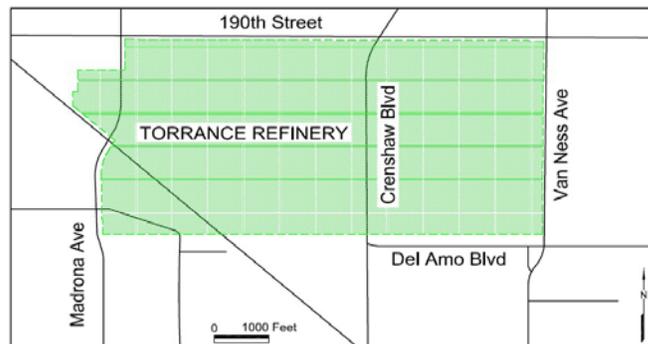


Figure 1: Location of ExxonMobil Torrance Oil Refinery

Previous refinery activities resulted in petroleum-related materials coming into contact with the ground and seeping into the soil and groundwater. Since the mid-1980s, ExxonMobil has been investigating and remediating (cleaning up) soil and groundwater contamination, under the direction of the Regional Water Board. This investigation and cleanup is an ongoing process.

**Status of the Investigation of Indoor Air Quality and Soil Vapor**

*Initial Investigation and Response Actions.* On November 30, 2007, a strong odor in a residential garage on Del Amo Boulevard near Van Ness Avenue was reported to ExxonMobil. Upon receiving the complaint, ExxonMobil notified the Torrance Fire Department for immediate response. Following this event, ExxonMobil began sampling the soil and soil vapor in surrounding areas to determine the presence and source of any hazardous soil vapors. The efforts included the collection of more than 200 soil gas samples from 116 locations in and around Del Amo Boulevard and Van Ness Avenue. All samples were collected following procedures accepted by the State of California and all samples were analyzed by laboratories certified by the State.

conducted. Based on test results, LACoFD determined that there were no significant differences between indoor air quality and outdoor air quality, suggesting that soil vapors were not coming into the homes. LACoFD subsequently transferred oversight of investigation and response activities to the Regional Water Board, which became the lead agency.

The Regional Water Board, DTSC and ExxonMobil are working closely together to investigate and remediate soil, soil vapor and groundwater contamination related to ExxonMobil’s Torrance Oil Refinery and to ensure that both public health and the environment are protected.

*Current Investigation.* Earlier this year, ExxonMobil submitted two work plans. One workplan specified the procedures to be followed when conducting additional indoor and ambient air quality tests. The other workplan outlined the procedures to be followed to identify and evaluate the effectiveness of potential mitigation technologies. Both work plans have been reviewed and approved by the Regional Water Board and are being implemented by ExxonMobil.

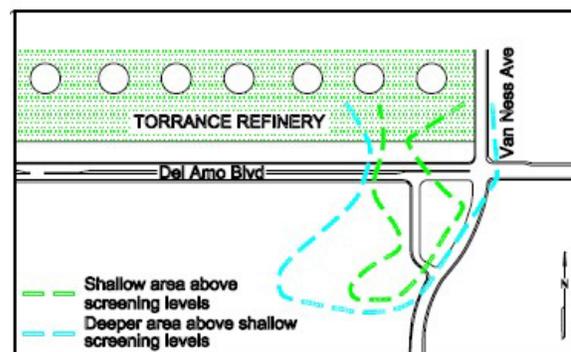
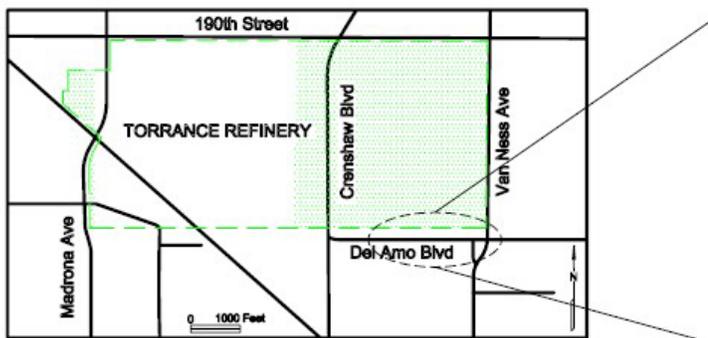


Figure 2: Investigation area

The investigation determined that methane and gasoline-type vapors, including benzene, were present in the subsurface soils in an area near the intersection of Del Amo Boulevard and Van Ness Avenue. Vapor concentrations indicated a *potential* threat to human health and the need for additional investigation. During December 2007, indoor and outdoor air tests at several residences in the neighborhood were

*Indoor Air Investigation:* During February/March 2008, ExxonMobil’s contractors, under DTSC’s oversight, performed air quality testing in nine homes in the neighborhood. Prior to testing, household products (such as cosmetics, perfumes, paint and paint thinners, gasoline containers and gasoline powered equipment, etc.) that interfere with testing results were removed to the extent possible. Some household items that interfere with

testing results could not be removed (such as vinyl flooring, carpet, carpeting glue, particleboard furnishings, etc.). In several homes, leaks of natural gas were found and reported to the homeowners and/or tenants for follow-up. Natural gas contains some chemicals that are the same as the ones under study. These natural gas leaks could not be repaired prior to testing and, as such, may have affected the testing results in those residences.

After 24 hours, ExxonMobil's contractors and DTSC returned to the residences to position the sampling devices. Under DTSC oversight, sampling devices were placed in areas of the home where vapor accumulation may be the greatest (e.g., small bathrooms or kitchens), and the primary living areas. In addition, one or more ambient air samples were collected immediately outside each residence.

The sampling devices were sent for analysis to an independent laboratory certified by the State of California. The laboratory's analytical methods targeted those chemical found in the soil vapor and followed State of California and US EPA approved procedures.

Once the results of air quality testing were received, DTSC performed an analysis of the results to determine if there was evidence of vapor intrusion into the homes. Based upon this analysis, DTSC determined that *"the results associated with the nine homes do not indicate that vapors are accumulating at levels of concern in indoor air because of subsurface vapor intrusion at this time"*, and *"based on the current results, the levels detected in indoor air do not pose a health risk at this time."*<sup>1</sup>

To confirm these results, DTSC has required at least one more round of indoor air sampling in the nine homes by June 2008, and periodic monitoring of the soil vapors.

In April 2008, ExxonMobil's contractors commenced a study testing a substructure venting technology under an area residence. Information collected can be

used to prevent vapor intrusion should evidence of soil vapor intrusion into homes be found.

**Soil Vapor Investigation:** Soil vapors were detected beneath some of the commercial buildings immediately to the south of Del Amo Boulevard, west of Van Ness Avenue. To determine their significance, ExxonMobil is collecting soil vapor samples from beneath several of the buildings. Laboratory analysis of these samples found soil vapor concentrations below levels of concern as determined by DTSC. Similar testing is scheduled for nearby commercial properties over the next few months.

### **Supplemental Indoor Air and Soil Vapor Testing**

In response to homeowners' requests, ExxonMobil is collecting indoor air and soil vapor samples at approximately 20 homes outside the present area of investigation. The homes are located along Del Amo Boulevard between Van Ness Avenue and Crenshaw Boulevard. The homes range in age and size and include both original and remodeled structures. Testing procedures have been reviewed and approved by the regulatory agencies. Once sampling has been completed, test results will be made available for public review. At this time, no additional testing of homes outside the present area of investigation is planned.

### **Community Involvement**

The Regional Water Board, DTSC and ExxonMobil want the community to be aware of and share its views on the on-going Del Amo area environmental investigation. To this end, meetings and open houses summarizing recent and pending activities and seeking public comment will be held periodically throughout the course of the investigation and remediation. To be placed on the notification list for these events, please call the Regional Water Board at 213.576.6802.

Additionally, community members are invited visit the two information repositories to read about the site and to call the individuals listed below to ask questions or share concerns.

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<sup>1</sup> Excerpted from the March 28, 2008 correspondence from the DTSC to ExxonMobil Oil Corporation

### **Information Repositories**

The Water Board invites and encourages you to learn more about this site and its environmental investigation. Fact sheets, workplans and sampling results for the site are available for public review. For your convenience, core documents have been placed in the Kathy Geissert Civic Center Library.

Katy Geissert Civic Center Library  
3302 Torrance Boulevard  
Torrance, CA 90503  
Phone: 310-618-5959

### **ExxonMobil Oil Corporation**

Carolin A. Keith, Public Affairs Manager  
3700 West 190<sup>th</sup> Street  
Torrance, California 90504  
Phone: 310-212-4618  
Email: carolin.a.keith@exxonmobil.com

You may review all documents for this site by visiting the Water Board's office. To ensure that staff at the Water Board can accommodate everyone wishing to examine its records, please call for an appointment.

Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Los Angeles Division  
320 West 4th Street, Suite 200  
Los Angeles, California 90013  
Phone: 213-576-6613

It is hoped that in the near future you will be able to access all site-related documents by visiting the Regional Water Board's web site.

### **Contact Information**

If you have any questions or would like additional information about the activities being conducted at the site, please contact:

Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board  
Stephen Cain, Senior Environmental Planner  
320 West 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 200  
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