

# New investigation uncovers largest polluters of vinyl chloride in U.S. & toxic impacts of making PVC plastics

*Five companies collectively produce more than 10 billion pounds of vinyl chloride in a year in the U.S.*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- A [new investigation](#)

[released today](#) by Toxic-Free Future titled "PVC

Poison Plastic" uncovers the corporations

responsible for creating the most vinyl chloride pollution in the United States and the far-

reaching toxic impacts of making polyvinyl chloride plastic (PVC). Following the recent Ohio train derailment where vinyl chloride and PVC plastic burned, this report reveals that vinyl chloride pollution is widespread across the country.



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*Mike Schade, director of Mind the Store, a program of Toxic-Free Future*

The [newly released report](#) reveals that five companies—Westlake Chemical, Formosa Plastics, Occidental Chemical, Shintech, and Orbia (Mexichem)—produce more than 10 billion pounds of vinyl chloride in a year, and are the source of more than 97% of vinyl chloride air pollution in the United States. The report also finds that vinyl chloride production creates large amounts of toxic waste. Vinyl chloride and PVC plastic plants shipped more than 20 million pounds of hazardous chlorinated waste to incinerators, cement kilns, and landfills in the south-central U.S. in 2021 including to Arkansas, Louisiana, and Texas. Cancer is a major concern from exposure to vinyl chloride via inhalation according to the EPA, which classifies vinyl chloride as a known human carcinogen.

Occidental Chemical, which produced the vinyl chloride in three of the rail cars that derailed and were burned in East Palestine, Ohio, reported it released 59,679 pounds of vinyl chloride into the air at its chemical plants in Texas, New Jersey, and Niagara Falls (Canada) in 2021. Shintech, the

producer of the PVC plastic in three other train cars that burned in the derailment, reported it released 45,250 pounds of vinyl chloride into the air at its plants in Louisiana and Texas in 2021. The nation's number one air polluter of vinyl chloride, Westlake Chemical, reported releasing 185,807 pounds of vinyl chloride into the air from its chemical plants in Kentucky, Louisiana, and Mississippi in 2021.

"It is outrageous that so many communities are being exposed day-in and day-out to the same dangerous chemical and plastic that burned in the Ohio train derailment," said Mike Schade, director of Mind the Store, a program of Toxic-Free Future. "This should be a wake-up call for our nation to the dangers of vinyl chloride and PVC plastic. PVC is a cheap, toxic plastic that pollutes from its production to transportation, manufacture into products, use, and disposal. And far too often these plastics chemical plants are located in environmental justice communities causing disproportionate impacts to vulnerable populations. Governments and major retailers like The Home Depot that sell PVC products, from flooring to piping to packaging, must step up and ban the sale of this poison plastic."

Toxic-Free Future's new report also includes interactive maps of the vinyl chloride, PVC plastic, and disposal facilities in the U.S. showing that many of these plants are located in low-income communities and communities of color. Of the U.S. residents that live within three miles of a vinyl chloride, PVC manufacturing, or PVC waste disposal facility, the report found that 63% are people of color. The report also found that residents of these areas earn 37% below the national average.

"I was born and raised in Mossville in a family of 13. My parents moved to this small town in 1955, as one of the 12 founding Black families of our humble community," said Christine Dellafosse Bennett, a community leader with Mossville Environmental Action Now (MEAN) in Mossville, Louisiana. "The land and air were clean. It truly was the land of the free and the foundation of what should have been our family's American dream. In the last few decades, we've witnessed an influx of industrial chemical plants coming into and surrounding our community, emitting vinyl chloride and other cancer-causing chemicals into our air and water. As local residents, we experienced debilitating headaches, some developed asthma, others experienced kidney failure, and the list of health effects goes on. My own health suffered a rapid decline, and the neighborhood where I raised my four children became unlivable. Unable to withstand the increasing effects of toxicity, my spouse and children have been forced to abandon our family home and the legacy left by my parents over 70 years ago. Why the PVC plastics industry decided to come and contaminate the lives of a small African American community is unfathomable."

"The people of East Palestine and the surrounding communities will be dealing with the impacts of vinyl chloride for years to come," said Amanda Kiger, co-executive director of River Valley Organizing. "But we know that many other communities have already been dealing with this for years. The ongoing disaster in Ohio and Pennsylvania helps to show why we need much stronger action from the federal government to address these toxic chemicals that are too often allowed

in our communities.”

Both the production and disposal of vinyl chloride and PVC contaminates soil and water with chlorinated chemicals such as dioxins—a family of chemicals that are extremely persistent, bioaccumulative, and toxic. These chemicals were the primary contaminant in Agent Orange, and are responsible for some of the nation’s biggest environmental tragedies.

[Health advocates](#) including Toxic-Free Future urge governments and companies like The Home Depot to adopt comprehensive safer chemicals policies to reduce and eliminate the production, use, and disposal of toxic chemicals like vinyl chloride and plastics like PVC and advance the use of safer chemicals and materials.

“Vinyl chloride is primarily used to make plastic and was designated a human carcinogen in 1974,” said Judith Enck, president of Beyond Plastics and former EPA regional administrator. “Here we are 49 years later, still dealing with the immense health and environmental problems caused by this chemical during production, transportation, use, and disposal. Environmental regulators and private businesses like The Home Depot need to take action to ban vinyl chloride and transition to safer substitutions. The public, particularly people living near vinyl chloride manufacturing facilities, deserve nothing less.”

This investigative report was written by Toxic-Free Future based on data analysis by the team at Material Research.

Read the full press release: <https://toxicfreefuture.org/press-room/new-investigation-following-ohio-train-derailment-uncovers-the-largest-polluters-of-vinyl-chloride-in-the-united-states-and-the-far-reaching-toxic-impacts-of-making-pvc-plastics/>

Interactive map: <https://toxicfreefuture.org/research/pvc-poison-plastic/map-where-are-the-largest-vinyl-chloride-producers-and-disposal-sites-located/>

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