

FAQ's about Perc

1. What is Perc?

Perchloroethylene, or perc, is the dominant chemical effective solvent used in dry cleaning. Perc is used by most professional drycleaners because it removes stains from all common types of fabrics. Perc is not flammable, unlike alternative solvents being used to clean clothes since the 1930's and '40's to the present. Since perc can be reused, it's a cost-effective and efficient solvent for dry cleaners to use. Perc is not only used in the dry cleaning industry but in show polish, paint, and etc.

2. How does perc pollute the environment?

Perc used to get into the air, water and ground during the cleaning, purification, and waste disposal phases of the dry cleaning process. Through improvements in equipment and more careful operating practices, perc consumption has decreased more than 65% in the past few years. Majority of the contaminations have occurred over several decades ago when the use and disposal of perc was not regulated.

3. Do I need to worry about wearing dry cleaned clothes?

We all are exposed to perc because it is found in the air and drinking water nationwide. As a consumer of dry cleaning services, may be exposed to levels of perc that are slightly higher than what is normally found in the outdoor air. These amounts are not hazardous to the average person's health; however like any chemical if extreme amounts are exposed there may be some health risks.

4. Is this cleaners contaminated, if so, what is being done about it?

Site investigation was done to this dry cleaner and results showed that there were contamination levels higher than what IEPA allows. Currently we are working with an Environmental Consulting company to remediate the contamination. We have an insurance policy with Illinois Trust Fund which covers up to \$300,000 for remediation costs. We also participate in a compliance program which requires us to take 4 hours of Continuing Education seminars and conduct Third Party Inspection. Taking all these measures will minimize any risk of contamination.

5. What have the cleaners industry been doing to clean up the contaminations if anything?

Dry cleaners have set up an organization in 1998 called the Trust Fund to help dry cleaners out with the cost of clean ups. This Fund is solely funded by dry cleaners with yearly fees. If a dry cleaner is found to contaminated, they are required to clean up to EPA's standards.