

# Manmade Hazards

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# Manmade Hazards

*The purpose of this section is to provide current information on manmade hazards in the City of Ventura, as well as emerging trends. This section relates to the City's public facilities, water resources, and natural resources chapters.*

*Key issue areas discussed in this section include:*

- *Descriptions of existing local hazardous material management plans and regulatory agencies.*
- *The number and locations of hazardous material sites in Ventura.*
- *Pervasiveness of local contamination of water supplies from PFAS chemicals in Ventura and throughout Southern California.*

## Policy and Regulatory Context

### Assembly Bill 2948

Assembly Bill (AB) 2948, passed in 1986, authorized counties to adopt a county hazardous waste management plan for dealing with hazardous waste generated within the community. In 1986 the Ventura County Board of Supervisors adopted the Ventura County Hazardous Waste/Materials Management Plan, which applies to the City. It identifies sources of hazardous waste, transportation routes needed to remove the waste and areas for potential treatment and disposal.

### Ventura County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan

The Ventura County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan was jointly developed by the County in partnership with nine of the County's ten incorporated cities, including Ventura, and several special districts. It was adopted in 2015 and is a five-year update to the 2010 Ventura County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, ensuring that the County continues to be eligible for future grant funding opportunities under the Federal Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000. The plan assesses both manmade and natural hazards, establishing mitigation strategies for reducing these risks. Hazards addressed include flooding, tsunamis, earthquakes, wildfires, and agricultural biological hazards. An update to the plan is currently underway and set to be completed by 2021.

### Ventura County Environmental Health Division

The Environmental Health Division of the Ventura County Resource Management Agency is the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for the County and manages the Hazardous Materials Program. The Hazardous Materials program implements State and Federal laws and regulations, County ordinance code, and local policies for the above programs. Compliance is achieved through routine and follow-up inspections, educational guidance, and enforcement actions. The Environmental Health Division is also involved with hazardous materials emergency response, investigation of illegal hazardous waste

disposal, and public complaints. The City Fire Department is designated as a Participating Agency and works in collaboration with the Environmental Health Division to implement aspects of the County Hazardous Materials Program within the City's jurisdiction.

## Emerging Trends

### Ventura Avenue

Ventura Avenue is a historic oil-related industrial area on the city's Westside. It is currently transitioning away from industrial activity, but industry still remains active and there are many aging industrial buildings in the area. As new developments are planned in this area, it is possible that there may be soil or groundwater contamination due to past industrial activity, with the potential for exposure of residents. The City will need to continue to monitor this in the future.

### Pesticides and Residential Development

Ventura has a significant amount of agricultural land uses, particularly concentrated on the eastern portion of the city. This may present a constraint on future development along the periphery of the city, where there is concern about pesticide use and exposure to residents. This is especially of concern for sensitive land uses, such as schools and residential developments. Setbacks from agricultural land uses are currently required for residential single-family homes. Development projects in the past have been prevented due to these concerns, so the City will need to take this into account for future plans.

### PFAS Contamination

There is growing concern about water supplies in Southern California and contamination with per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances (PFAS). These manmade, fluorinated organic chemicals were introduced in the 1940s and have been used extensively in consumer products and other materials designed to be waterproof, stain-resistant or non-stick. PFAS do not break down in the environment and can accumulate in the human body, causing serious health issues, including low infant birth weights, immune deficiencies, thyroid and liver problems and some cancers. PFAS water contamination has affected residents in San Bernardino and Los Angeles, and elevated levels have been detected in water sources from Santa Clarita to Yorba Linda. According to mapping tools from the State Water Resources Control Board, there are six potential PFAS sources in and around Ventura. While there is currently no known PFAS contamination impacting Ventura's water supplies, due to the persistent nature of the chemicals this will continue to be a hazard of concern in coming decades. See the Water Resources Chapter for further discussion of the water resources in Ventura.

## Existing Conditions

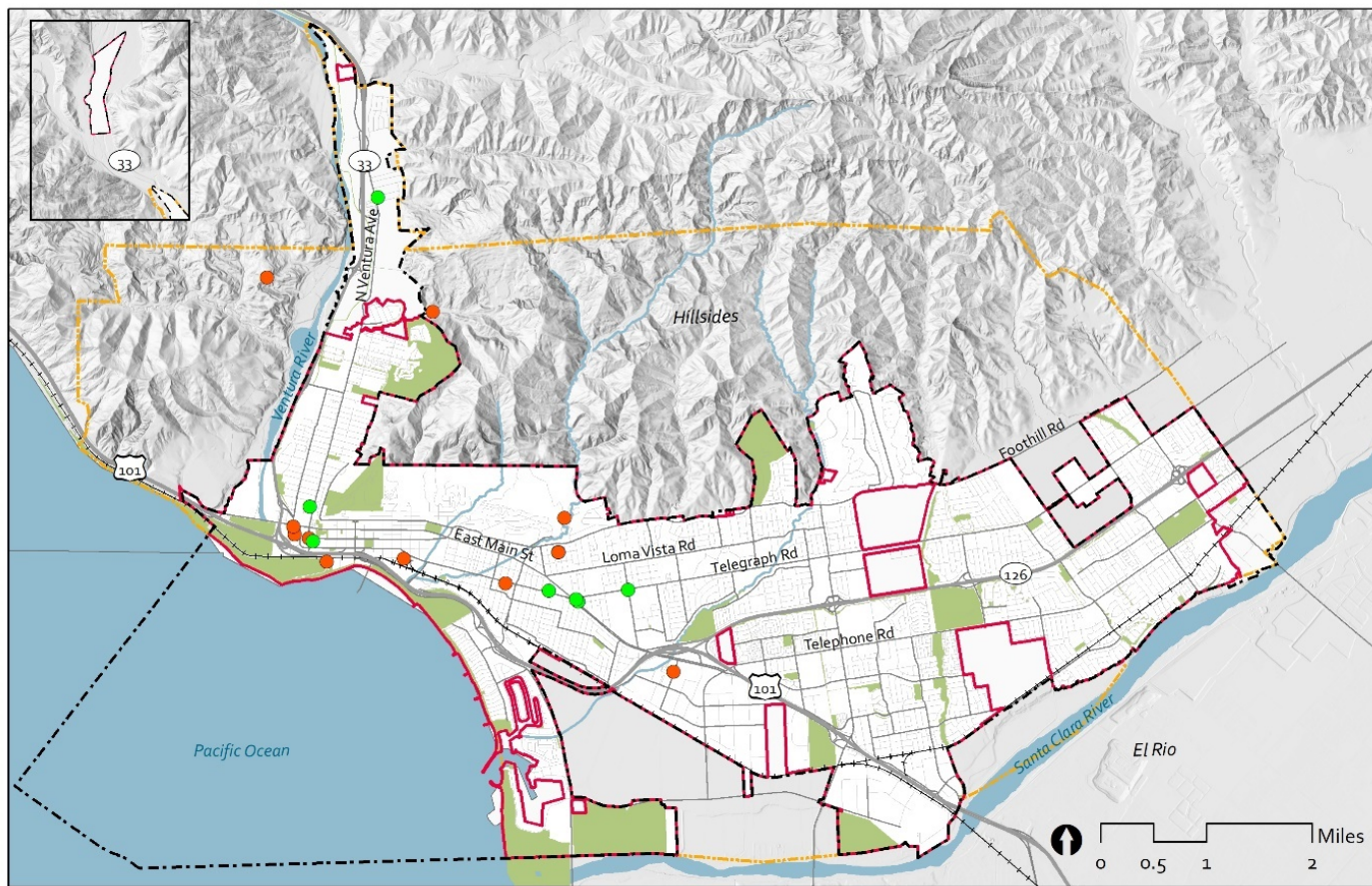
A wide variety of products, chemical and purified chemical compounds, and elements considered hazardous or toxic are used in households, commercial businesses, and industrial operations and processes. These include home and pool related chlorine products, chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, stored fuels and waste oil, chemical solvents and lubricants, and a variety of medical materials. The improper use and management of hazardous materials can pose a potential threat to the community and the environment.

Leaking underground storage tanks (LUST) and former industrial and commercial sites can expose the community and environment to hazardous materials. Gasoline storage tanks from former or current gas stations are subject to leaking over time, which can contaminate soil, groundwater and/or surface water. Leaks require immediate action upon detection to reduce the spread of contaminants and reduce potential harm. Industrial and commercial activities sometimes utilize hazardous and toxic chemicals for operations, and spills or mishandling of these materials can result in site contamination. These sites are known as “brownfields” and their clean-up and revitalization is regulated by the Ventura County Health Care Agency and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA). Regional Water Quality Control Boards and the Department of Toxic Substances Control also function as oversight agencies for some remediation projects.

## Hazardous Material Sites

Ventura is an old oil town, with residential, industrial, and agricultural areas throughout. There are a number of hazardous material sites within Ventura, such as LUST sites, contaminated groundwater sites under the jurisdiction of the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Site Cleanup Program, and hazardous waste sites under the Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) Site Cleanup Program. These are largely concentrated along Ventura Avenue on the City’s westside. There are 18 open or active cleanup sites in the City that have not been remediated or closed. These sites are listed in Table 1 and their locations are shown in Figure 1. There are also approximately 68 inactive or closed SWRCB Site Cleanup Program Sites and 241 inactive or closed LUST sites in the City. There are currently no active or inactive DTSC sites in the City.

Figure 1: Location of Active and Open Hazardous Material Sites in Ventura



**City of Ventura Hazardous Materials Sites**

- Ventura City Limits
- Sphere of Influence
- Planning Boundary
- Green/Open Space
- Railroad
- Roadway
- Cleanup Program Site
- LUST Cleanup Site

Data provided by City of Ventura, 2008, 2019, 2020.  
Additional data provided by California State Water Resources Control Board GeoTracker, 2020.



The transport of chemicals over roadways or through industrial accidents is another source of hazardous material incidents. Hazardous materials are typically transported in California on highways, railways, and other large commercial thoroughfares. The main highways through Ventura are U.S. Highway 101, State Route 33, State Route 126, and State Route 118. Railroads go north and south from the City along the coast, as well as east towards Saticoy.

## Management of Hazardous Materials

To reduce impacts associated with hazardous material incidents, Ventura County has developed a Hazardous Materials Emergency Response Plan. The goal of the plan is to protect life, property, and the environment from the effects of a hazardous material release to air, land or water or a hazardous material fire. Procedures to be used in the event of an incident and specific agency responsibilities are identified within the plan.

The Ventura County Environmental Health Division is the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) that provides regulatory oversight over hazardous materials and hazardous waste programs in Ventura, unincorporated areas as well as other cities in Ventura County. The CUPA program provides regulatory oversight for six statewide environmental programs: hazardous materials business plans, hazardous waste, tiered permitting, underground storage tanks, aboveground petroleum storage, and the California Accidental Release Prevention Program. The Ventura Fire Department is a Participating Agency that implements the Hazardous Materials Business Plan, Aboveground Petroleum Storage, CalARP and Underground Storage Tank programs within the City of Ventura. The City Fire Department also maintains a team specially trained and equipped to respond to hazardous materials emergencies under its Hazmat program. The hazardous materials unit works to identify unknown substances, assess threats, coordinate multi-agency responses, and mitigate spills and releases for the Environmental Health Division and emergency services.

## Emergency Evacuation Routes

The Ventura Police Department has evacuation maps for every area in Ventura, to be used in the event of an emergency incident. These evacuation routes vary from area to area, but generally direct citizens toward Highway 33 or Main Street. Exceptions are the Mills Road to Victoria Ave area, which is directed south toward Loma Vista Road, and the Cobblestone Drive, Ondulando, and Clearpoint Neighborhoods, which are directed south towards Foothill Drive. These maps are available online for citizens, along with other emergency preparedness information via Ready Ventura County, a public service advertising campaign designed to educate and empower citizens for emergency situations.

## Conclusions/Issues and Opportunities

The following identifies issues and opportunities related to manmade hazards that can be addressed in the General Plan Update:

- The City should develop an approach to new developments that may come into conflict with pesticide use from agriculture and old industrial sites, mainly in the Ventura Avenue area. These constraints are likely to persist and affect new development in the future.

- With more testing and information being released regarding PFAS contamination in Southern California, the City will need to continue to monitor possible sources of contamination near its water supply sources, such as Lake Casitas.

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