

From: Ashley Gjovik ashleygjovik@apple.com
Subject: Re: Apple Chemical Exposure, Ethical Concerns
Date: April 21, 2021 at 11:25 AM
To: [REDACTED]@apple.com



[REDACTED]

I'm trying to run this up the chain with I&D too, but they think it will just end up back with EHS. Which employees are going to spend the most time around vapor intrusion pathways (plumbing, vents, etc) — probably our Black and Brown employees working in maintenance & cooking type roles. Who's going to spend the most time physically exerting themselves running things around at these buildings? Probably our technicians and admins, who are also predominately people of color and women, respectively. Apparently women get worse health issues from this type of chemical exposure. Because we have high body fat and sensitive hormones, etc. So if there are chemical vapor issues in buildings, women will get sicker. It also can mess with our reproductive health and pregnancies. So Black & Brown women get the worst of it.

We're clearly not the only ones doing this.... That Google/TCE exposure news coverage was horrifying. Figured I'd at least try though. You know me.

Ashley M. Gjovik
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On Apr 15, 2021, at 1:09 PM, Ashley Gjovik <agjovik@icloud.com> wrote:

Actually, maybe it's too late to get ahead of this. Just saw Lisa just announced some big community environmental health event on 4/21.

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Begin forwarded message:

From: Ashley Gjovik <agjovik@icloud.com>
Subject: Apple Chemical Exposure, Ethical Concerns
Date: April 15, 2021 at 11:55:02 AM PDT
To: [REDACTED]@apple.com
Cc: Ashley Gjovik <ashleygjovik@apple.com>

Hey [REDACTED]

I wanted to raise an ethical concern to you — as you know I like to do when I see something that I feel is morally wrong. Two updates below, one work-specific general ethics concern & one personal as an Apple employee.

Background

I work on the "Triple Site" in Sunnyvale (Apple calls it "Stewart 1", but the EPA Superfund program calls it the Triple Site). Three gross, huge, 80's silicon groundwater plumes that all merged into one giant mega-plume. I'm in the TRW Microwave site — which has a long history of indoor air vapor intrusion (TCE, vinyl chloride, Chloroform, etc. — see map below) It had vapor intrusion above industrial max risk limits until at least 2014, with my desk being on one of the hot spots. They did a few small, quick indoor air tests in 2015 and that was the first time it ever came back ok (though was high for other new chemicals but they didn't count it for any good reason). After 2015, they never tested or monitored again until this year — they're going to do some indoor air testing at some point in 2021.

I had a near fainting spell in my lockdown in Sept 2019 — very much like what I had in my apartment last year. It was the only other time I felt something like that. I've raised it at work last week that I think it was more likely than not a reaction to vapor intrusion issues in our work building. I've been talking to EHS and ER about the building and my questions and concerns in detail. I can forward if you're interested in the specifics.

One thing they said, I thought you'd be very interested in. **EHS said Apple feels it has no obligation to disclose to employees if their workspace is on a Superfund site or other chemical release site.** 🙄

My building & lockdown:

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<PastedGraphic-21.png>

<PastedGraphic-22.png>

Etc. I have a whole Keynote of this stuff if you're interested.

General Ethical Concerns

This issue is not specific to my building. Apparently most Apple buildings are on [chemical release sites](#). You can use the search tools on my website (<https://www.ashleygjovik.com/research.html>) under *Research* to check yourself, but a few screenshots at the bottom of this email so you can see just how bad it is. When I asked why they aren't telling employees — what EHS told me was that Apple did an internal review and decided it has no legal obligation to disclose anything about these release sites to employees. I immediately challenged them, what about a moral and ethical obligation? And he said it would be a much bigger discussion and didn't give me any step forward on it. You're always my step forward on this stuff. :)

Actually, I was sharing all this with [REDACTED] and she's apparently preparing a presentation for Lisa right now about a new Env Justice type project Apple wants to lead and then when I told her what Apple's actually doing... she's like, uh oh. She's been doing more research and is preparing to raise the issue to Lisa in some way. But it's even more complicated. I found an [article](#) from 2016 where apparently Apple was breaking hazardous waste laws and settled with the state gov for half a million. Alisha ([REDACTED] manager) was quoted as saying that *"We've worked closely with [the Department of Toxic Substance Control] to ensure that going forward we have the proper permits for our current site. As we do with all our facilities, we followed our stringent set of health and safety standards, which go well beyond legal requirements."* But when it comes to working on contaminated chemical release sites, apparently Apple's stance is to only do what is absolutely legally required. At least that's what they told me.

There are also practical concerns about this — that I raised with EHS as well. I asked, what happens if someone starts messing with one of the seals on the subslat vents because they don't know what it is (and in my building, literal Hades is beneath) — and he's like OMG DO NOT LET ANYONE DO THAT. And then I was like, what happens if people start feeling sick and it could be VI and they don't know that's happening and he's like OMG IF YOU SMELL ANYTHING WEIRD CALL US IMMEDIATELY. And I'm like, listen you fools, how is anyone supposed to know to do that if they don't even know it's remediation site. I mentioned that 2018 issue where TCE vapor intrusion flooded a Google building and no one knew it was a release site or even that the VI was occurring until something caught on days later and evacuated them. Google had encouraged any pregnant woman who were exposed to speak with their doctors. (Article [here](#)). Still no good response from EHS.

So. I would like to find a way to have that "larger conversation." And it sounds like it might actually be perfectly timed since Lisa wants Apple to come out publicly talking about "healthy communities" and other EJ topics. And Apple generally likes to have it own house in order before it tells anyone else what to do.

Personal Concern

This all started to unravel for me when a few weeks ago EHS emailed me & our mgmt team casually saying they wanted to do vapor intrusion testing in our office building. I had known my building was a Superfund for a few years. A coworker who grew up in Sunnyvale warned me that it's one of the most contaminated Superfund sites in the country. I've always tried to not drink the water there. I had mentioned the Superfund status to a few coworkers casually, but it really worried me that most people had no idea. So when the strange VI email came in — I decided to use it as an opportunity to inform folks. I replied asking if the testing was specific to our site, or if it was across all of Apple's chemical release sites and linked to a bunch of article & the Superfund EPA page for our building.

My manager got very upset about this. He gave me "employee feedback" about it. He said it was only a warning because I'm suffering from "mental health issues" (A couple weeks earlier I had told him I had PTSD from what happened last year). He then forbid me from speaking to anyone about my concerns or the sites Superfund status other than him and our Env, Health, & Safety team.

I raised this to employee relations and they told me I have no prohibition, can speak freely, and they're investigating him now... which is leading to them unearthing all of the crazy stuff these tech managers do to us in addition. So I'm preparing to need to find another job if necessary. I haven't gotten along with my manager for years anyway.

I told our senior director he either needs to move me under him or another director, or I'm going to look for another job at Apple or elsewhere. I'm supposed to talk to ER again next week as well. We'll see.

Here's some of the maps. And I'm OoO until next Wed — but happy to talk about this more earlier. I'm thinking about it A LOT.

Emailing from personal email too since I'll be checking that if there's anything you want to do or know sooner than later.

-Ashley

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<https://qz.com/1017181/silicon-valley-pollution-there-are-more-superfund-sites-in-santa-clara-than-any-other-us-county/>

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<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/search-superfund-sites-where-you-live#map>

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<https://www3.epa.gov/myem/envmap/myenv.html?minx=-122.03170&miny=37.33115&maxx=-122.02970&maxy=37.33315&ve=19,37.33215,-122.03070&pText=1%20Infinite%20Loop%2C%20Cupertino%2C%20California%2C%2095014&pTheme=home>

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Apple Park: <https://disasterarea.home.blog/2019/07/12/apple-headquarters-on-the-intersil-dtkm-sl720641214-epa-superfund-site-daycare-banned/>

As for my building, Stewart 1 (aka TRW Microwave, aka Triple Site), I think The Atlantic described it best as *"The empty octagonal glass building is a TRW Microwave Superfund site. I'd been walking on a paved-over environmental disaster zone, colonized by whoever wanted to benefit from lower leasing prices and a lack of NIMBY opponents."*

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<https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2013/07/not-even-silicon-valley-escapes-history/277824/>

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