

Since the Industrial Revolution's economic boom, there has been a need to balance economic growth, environmental protections, and human health. As the economy and job market grew due to the expansion of industrial jobs during the 1940s and 1950s, there was little governmental regulation on the by-products leaving these factories and energy production plants. In the 1960s, the United States began creating laws and regulatory agencies to protect its natural resources from misuse.

POINT SOURCE

Point sources of pollution are any single identifiable source of contaminants from which pollutants are discharged, like vehicles and industry.



NON-POINT SOURCE

Non-point sources of contaminants come from many single locations, like agriculture or erosion, but a specific source is difficult to identify.



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Please visit our webpage at www.srel.uga.edu or visit us on social media (@ugasrel or #UGASREL).



Savannah River Ecology Laboratory
UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA

The University of Georgia's Savannah River Ecology Laboratory pursues basic and applied research at multiple levels of ecological organization, from atoms to ecosystems. The SREL is located near Aiken, South Carolina, on the Savannah River Site, a Department of Energy facility, and the first national environmental research park. The lab's research extends beyond the site to regional and global projects. To date, the lab has more than 3,000 peer-reviewed publications.



Contaminants In Our Lives

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Where do contaminants come from and how do those contaminants effect our environment?

TYPES OF CONTAMINANTS

There are many types of contaminants in our lives. Contaminants are anything that humans concentrate and put where it shouldn't be in the environment or use, creating a negative impact on the environment and human health.

BIOLOGICAL

Biological contaminants include organisms, like bacteria, viruses, and fungi, as well as human waste from sewers.

PHYSICAL

Physical contaminants are items typically made by humans, like trash, but can also include sediment in the water column.

CHEMICAL

Chemical contaminants can be natural or human-made. Excess metals, salts, pesticides, and vehicle emissions all are chemical contaminants. A common result of aerial chemical contamination is smog.

RADIOLOGICAL

Radiological contaminants are elements that emit radiation and are present where they would not be naturally.

Excess fertilizers are contaminants in our waterways. Rivers and forests do not need extra nutrients, so when fertilizers are present, it can cause big problems. Using fertilizer responsibly on our lawns means that the excess doesn't enter our environment.

If we use too much lawn fertilizer, the excess nutrients become contaminants and pollute our waterways. This can cause problems for a well-balanced ecosystem.

