

The Toxics Release Inventory (TRI)



A Landmark Law

This fact sheet describes the Toxics Release Inventory provisions of the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act of 1986 (EPCRA), or SARA Title III, a publicly available database. TRI is administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is based on reports by facility managers. TRI is one of a number of state and federal worker and community chemical right to know laws that you can use to help reduce toxic exposures where you work, live, or play.

The Toxics Release Inventory (TRI)

Under EPCRA, each year certain kinds of industrial facilities are required to report their environmental releases and chemical waste management practices to TRI. Covered facilities must disclose their releases of about 770 toxic chemicals and 33 chemical categories to air, water, and land. Approximately 21,000 facilities are covered across the nation. They must also disclose the quantities of chemicals they recycle, treat, burn, or otherwise dispose of on-site and off-site. Annual data is available since 1987.

Quick Facts for 2020

	New Jersey	United States
Number of TRI Facilities	328	21,154
Total Production-Related Waste Managed	156.0 million lbs	28.2 billion lbs
Total On-site & Off-site Disposal or Other Releases	11.6 million lbs	3.0 billion lbs
Total On-site:	5.2 million lbs	2.6 billion lbs
Air	1.4 million lbs	550.2 million lbs
Water	3.8 million lbs	193.6 million lbs
Land	47.7 thousand lbs	1.9 billion lbs
Total Off-site	6.3 million lbs	394.2 million lbs



Who Must Report?

A facility must report to TRI if it:

- Conducts manufacturing operations or is a federal facility; and
- Has 10 or more full-time equivalent employees, and
- Manufactures or processes more than 25,000 pounds or otherwise uses more than 10,000 pounds of any listed chemical during the calendar year.

In 2020, 328 facilities in New Jersey reported to TRI.

These facilities include chemical plants, oil refineries, oil and coal fired electrical utilities, certain hazardous waste treatment and disposal facilities, chemical wholesalers, petroleum bulk storage, and solvent recyclers.

What Must Be Reported?

Information reported includes:

- Facility Identification and management contact person.
- Environmental permits held.
- Amounts (in pounds) of each listed chemical released as:
 - » Fugitive or Non-point Air Emissions (may impact worker exposures from leaking valves, etc.)
 - » Stack or Point Air Emissions
 - » Discharges to Receiving Streams or Water Bodies
 - » Discharges to Land (including landfills) Publicly owned treatment works
- Amounts of each chemical shipped from the facility to other locations for recycling, energy recovery, treatment, or disposal.
- Maximum amount of chemical present on-site at the facility during the year.

How Do Facilities Report?

TRI data is reported by individual facilities on a form called "Form R." EPA takes these forms and converts them into an electronic database. The Forms are submitted on or before July 1 and cover the previous calendar year. Forms are submitted to both the EPA and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.





Benefits of TRI Data

- You can get this free data easily.
 - » Is well organized – chemical specific, facility specific, multi-media (land, air, water), annual, limited confidentiality, and mandatory, with comparable data elements.
- This is data submitted by management, so they find it difficult to challenge their own information.
 - » Is intended to elevate the position of environmental compliance officers within corporations (including through signature of senior official on TRI form) to promote internal awareness and empower compliance managers to work to reduce releases.
- Fugitive (and sometimes stack) air emission data suggests possible sources of worker exposure.
- You can do yearly comparisons to see if facilities are reducing or increasing their emissions.
- You can plan pollution prevention campaigns focusing on specific facilities (or industries or neighborhoods).
 - » Public reporting creates an incentive for companies to improve environmental performance.

Limits of TRI Data

TRI does *not*:

- Cover all toxic chemicals that can hurt human health or the environment.
- Require reporting from many industries that pollute, such as solid waste incinerators.
- Require reporting of actual worker or neighbor exposure. Also:
- Reporting facilities usually *estimate* their releases and waste generation, rather than actually *measure* emissions. The law does not require monitoring. Facilities find that estimating is cheaper.
 - » TRI is unsuitable for risk assessment because the data: understate pollutants released (chemical lists, thresholds, employees, industry sectors); is inherently limited (estimates in reporting); lacks appropriate format (no peak release data, environmental setting, exposure data, uncertainty of effects, etc.).
- Management is responsible for data accuracy. EPA review of this data is limited.
- EPA enforcement of this law is inadequate.

Understanding and Obtaining TRI Data

Go to [epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program/tri-data-and-tools](https://www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program/tri-data-and-tools) and use

[TRI Search](#) to access a variety of reports for every facility that has reported to EPA since 1987. You may narrow your search based on facility name/ID, geographic location, tribal identifier, industry classification, or chemical names/CAS numbers.

For each facility listed in the search results, you can go directly to a report containing:

- Names of reported chemicals and the most recent year of TRI reporting (**TRI Facility Report**)
- Indications of any newly implemented source reduction activities and text descriptions other pollution prevention practices (**TRI Facility Report**)
- Waste management methods and trends (**TRI Facility Report**)
- Trends in environmental releases of reported chemicals (**TRI Facility Report**)
- Information about transfers of waste containing TRI chemicals (**TRI Facility Report**)
- Basic environmental permit and compliance information (**TRI Facility Report**)
- Details about pollution prevention and source reduction activities implemented at the facility (**P2 Report**)
- Estimates of potential relative risks posed by the facility and its industry sector (**Risk Screening Report**)
- Access to individual Form Rs or Form As

1. For questions about TRI data you can contact the EPA Region 2 Coordinator which you can look up here: <https://www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program/tri-regional-coordinators#region2>
2. The most common TRI tools can be found here: [epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program/tri-data-and-tools#tritools](https://www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program/tri-data-and-tools#tritools)
3. TRI National analysis — EPA may take 18 months to get data online - <https://www.epa.gov/trinationalanalysis>
4. EPA's site is: <https://www.epa.gov/toxics-release-inventory-tri-program> Using EPA's online tools you can search TRI data by zipcode, county, state facility name, industry sector, etc
5. To see data about specific facilities that is six months old, contact the N.J. Department of Environmental Protection, which receives a duplicate Form R from facilities by July 1 of each year, contact:

Laura Henne
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
Bureau of Sustainability
Phone: 609-777-4043
Email: Laura.Henne@dep.nj.gov

You can review the data at DEP for free or you can order photocopies for a fee.

You may also wish to review at DEP a) the annual N.J. Release and Pollution Prevention Report (DEQ 114) for specific facilities that quantifies data on their “throughput” of chemicals; and b) the annual Community Right to Know Survey, which contains data on the amounts of about 1,000 chemicals stored or used on-site.

Well-presented data on health hazards of specific chemicals can be found in New Jersey's Hazardous Substance Fact Sheets at <https://web.doh.state.nj.us/rtkhsfs/indexfs.aspx>. (Some of these fact sheets are also available in Spanish).



Produced by the New Jersey Work Environment Council (WEC). For help using the TRI, more information, or to learn how your organization or union can affiliate with WEC, call (609) 882-6100 or email info@njwec.org.