

Timeline of Toxic Contamination and Supply of Clean Water

1969	Union Carbide sets up pesticide formulation plant in Bhopal. Hazardous waste routinely dumped in factory premises.
1977	Solar Evaporation Ponds built on 32 acres for dumping of hazardous wastes. Ponds flood annually in monsoon season.
1982	<p>Telex dated March 25, 1982: "Phase II evaporation pond almost emptied. Reps of KR Datey at site and investigation of the leakage in progress. Unfortunately, emergency pond has also shown some signs of leakage."</p> <p>Telex dated April 10, 1982: "Continued leakage from evaporation pond causing great concern."</p>
1989	<p>"Samples drawn in June-July '89 from land-fill areas and effluent treatment pits inside the plant were sent to R and D. The solid samples had organic contamination varying from 10% to 100% and contained known ingredients like naphthol and naphthalene in substantial quantities.</p> <p>"Majority of the liquid samples contained naphthol and/or Sevin in quantities far more than permitted by ISI for onland disposal. All samples caused 100% mortality to fish in toxicity assessment studies and were to be diluted several fold to render them suitable for survival of fish."</p>
1990	Citizen's Environmental Laboratory in Boston identified highly toxic materials (dichlorobenzenes and polynuclear aromatic hydrocarbons) in the soil and water surrounding the plant.
1991	State Research Laboratory of Public Health Engineering Department reported serious chemical contamination in samples taken from 11 tubewells in the area.
1994	Arthur D. Little, USA retained National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) on behalf of Union Carbide India Limited to study contamination inside the factory premises. NEERI reported that over one-fifth of the factory site had been used for dumping hazardous waste.
1996	State Research Laboratory of Public Health Engineering Department once again reported serious chemical contamination in samples taken from 11 tubewells in the area. The municipal corporation declared water from 100 tube wells unfit for drinking though no alternative drinking water source was suggested or provided.
1999	Greenpeace International conducts a study that finds solid wastes, soils, groundwater samples collected within plant area to be high in mercury, organochlorine compounds and 12 volatile organochlorine compounds (VOCs). Mercury concentrations were found to be 20,000 to six million times higher than expected.
2002	Soil samples, groundwater and vegetables from residential areas surrounding UCIL were found contaminated by: mercury, chromium, copper, nickel, lead, toxic organochlorines, hexachloroethane, hexachlorobuta-diene, pesticide HCH (BBHC) VOCs. These same contaminants were also found in breast milk.