

0. DEATH & DESTRUCTION IN MOJAVE - Story Preface

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Hexavalent chromium (also known as "Chrome 6" or "Chrome VI") is dangerous. This sign, positioned near PG&E's Hinkley compressor station, warns people that the "waste water" (containing hexavalent chromium) "in use" is dangerous. No such warning sign was in place before groundwater remediation, at the Hinkley site, began. Image online via the *LA Times*.

Many people and domestic animals in the high desert town of [Hinkley, California](#) were getting sick. Some had died. Since residents depended on the local groundwater supply for all their needs, were the illnesses somehow related to [PG&E's Gas Compressor Station](#) located nearby?

On December 7, 1987 officials from the company advised the State of California they had detected levels of [hexavalent chromium](#) (chrome 6) in a groundwater monitoring well north of the compressor station's waste water ponds. The levels were ten times greater than the maximum amount allowed by law.

Known as a [cancer-causing chemical](#) since the 1920s, chrome 6 is especially dangerous to [lungs](#). Since many of the Hinkley residents were reporting respiratory problems, a link to chrome 6 contamination seemed possible.

After PG&E reported the pollution to the government, company officials started a program to buy every piece of property in the community thought to be affected by the pollution. (That's what medical records had to do with real estate transactions.) It wasn't long before PG&E had 75% of those houses and buildings destroyed.

The company reported it was merely responding to vandalism.

See [Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:](#)

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/DEATH-DESTRUCTION-IN-MOJAVE-Erin-Brockovich>

See [Learning Tasks for this story online at:](#)

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Media Stream



Map Depicting Hinkley, California

Image online, courtesy the [epodunk.com](#) website.

View this asset at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/view/Map-Depicting-Hinkley-California>



Hexavalent Chromium Is A Known Carcinogen

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