

# California

## 49 Percent of Students at Risk of Chemical Catastrophes

In California, 3,317,846 students attend school within the vulnerability zone of a high-risk chemical facility. That means that nearly 1 in 2 students from preschool to high school face chemical leaks, gas clouds, or explosions.

The April 2013 fertilizer plant explosion in West, Texas demonstrated the unseen dangers of chemical facilities. That explosion killed 15 people, injured hundreds of others, and destroyed three schools. If the explosion had occurred during the day, many schoolchildren might have been harmed as well.



But many students and schools could be better protected from danger. Safer chemicals and technologies exist that would reduce or eliminate these vulnerability zones and leave significantly fewer children at risk, and some facilities have already made the switch. However, since these changes are not required, many other facilities continue to use dangerous chemicals and leave schools, children, and neighbors at risk. The Obama administration could require facilities to switch to safer technologies and reduce the risk to California's students.

California's kids should not have to go to school each day with the looming threat of a chemical disaster when safer technologies exist.

### Top Five Counties Where Students Are Most at Risk

County	Number of Students in Vulnerability Zones	Number of Schools in Vulnerability Zones
Ventura	155,790 (95%)	288
Contra Costa	169,477 (91%)	341
Solano	56,924 (91%)	100
Stanislaus	94,033 (86%)	173
San Joaquin	122,532 (86%)	217

Every state has locations where chemical facilities place more students at risk. The first table lists the counties in California that have the highest percentage of students attending schools in vulnerability zones. Students in Ventura County are more likely to attend school in a vulnerability zone than anywhere else in the state as its facilities put 155,790 students at risk – 95% of all school-aged children in the county.

### Top Five Schools at Risk of a Chemical Disaster

School Name	City	Number of Vulnerability Zones	Number of Students
Gulf Avenue Elementary School	Wilmington	7	952
George De La Torre Jr. Elementary	Wilmington	7	795
Saints Peter & Paul Elementary School	Wilmington	7	166
Phineas Banning Senior High	Wilmington	6	3,058
Edison High	Stockton	6	1,955

The known vulnerability zones in California put a total of 5,727 schools at risk, some of which are in more than one vulnerability zone. The second table lists the California schools that are currently located in the most known vulnerability zones in the state. Overlapping vulnerability zones, which increase the risk to the schools and communities covered, often occur around larger cities and heavily industrialized areas. In California, the schools bearing the greatest risk from such overlapping vulnerability zones include Gulf Avenue Elementary School in Wilmington, George De La Torre Jr. Elementary in Wilmington, and Saints Peter & Paul Elementary School in Wilmington.

### Top Five Facilities Putting the Most Students at Risk

Facility Name	City	Number of Students in Facility's Vulnerability Zone	Number of Schools in Facility's Vulnerability Zone
KIK SoCal Inc.	Santa Fe Springs	679,002	1,118
JCI Jones Chemicals Inc. - Torrance	Torrance	625,832	1,071
GATX - Colton, CA Tank Car Facility	Colton	511,089	722
AMVAC Chemical Corporation	Los Angeles	490,614	850
Chemical Unloading Facility	Perris	449,158	629

The facilities listed in the third table place the most students in California at risk of a chemical disaster. KIK SoCal Inc. in Santa Fe Springs, which stores 180,000 pounds of chlorine, has 679,002 students studying in its vulnerability zone, thereby putting more students at risk than any other facility in California. JCI Jones Chemicals Inc. in Torrance is in second place, with 625,832 students in its vulnerability zone. Any efforts in California to better protect schools from chemical risks should include changes to reduce the vulnerability zones of these top facilities.



### What Can You Do?

First, [take action](http://bit.ly/kids-in-danger-zones-action) (<http://bit.ly/kids-in-danger-zones-action>) and urge the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to protect our children by requiring facilities to adopt safer chemical alternatives. Act now and urge others to stand up for children in California.

Second, use our [interactive map](http://tesla.foreffectivegov.org/KidsAndToxins/bin-release) (<http://tesla.foreffectivegov.org/KidsAndToxins/bin-release>) to learn more about the dangerous facilities in your area and the schools they place in harm's way.

Third, contact facilities in your area and your local officials. Demand that they establish a plan to shift to safer technologies or store smaller quantities of hazardous chemicals to reduce the vulnerability zones that place children, schools, and communities at risk.

