

# North Dakota

## 26 Percent of Students at Risk of Chemical Catastrophes

In North Dakota, 27,211 students attend school within the vulnerability zone of a high-risk chemical facility. That means that 1 in 4 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 North Dakota's students.

North Dakota'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
Burleigh	11,210 (88%)	26
Morton	3,628 (81%)	11
Barnes	960 (62%)	4
Walsh	864 (50%)	3
Cass	8,759 (39%)	18

Every state has locations where chemical facilities place more students at risk. The first table lists the counties in North Dakota that have the highest percentage of students attending schools in vulnerability zones. Students in Burleigh County are more likely to attend school in a vulnerability zone than anywhere else in the state as its facilities put 11,210 students at risk – 88% 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
Oak Grove Lutheran School	Fargo	3	432
Central High School	Grand Forks	2	929
Victor Solheim Elementary School	Bismarck	2	541
Lewis and Clark Elementary School	Mandan	2	448
Nativity Elementary School	Fargo	2	350

The known vulnerability zones in North Dakota put a total of 67 schools at risk, some of which are in more than one vulnerability zone. The second table lists the North Dakota 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 North Dakota, the schools bearing the greatest risk from such overlapping vulnerability zones include Oak Grove Lutheran School in Fargo, Central High School in Grand Forks, and Victor Solheim Elementary School in Bismarck.

### 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
Tesoro Mandan Refinery	Mandan	14,838	37
Grand Forks Water Treatment	Grand Forks	1,652	6
Valley City Water Treatment Plant	Valley City	960	4
Grafton Water Department	Grafton	864	3
City of Fargo Water Treatment Plant	Fargo	829	4

The facilities listed in the third table place the most students in North Dakota at risk of a chemical disaster. Tesoro Mandan Refinery in Mandan, which stores 107,000 pounds of hydrofluoric acid (conc >50%), has 14,838 students studying in its vulnerability zone, thereby putting more students at risk than any other facility in North Dakota. Grand Forks Water Treatment in Grand Forks is in second place, with 1,652 students in its vulnerability zone. Any efforts in North Dakota 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 North Dakota.

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.

