

# Rhode Island

## 67 Percent of Students at Risk of Chemical Catastrophes

In Rhode Island, 108,777 students attend school within the vulnerability zone of a high-risk chemical facility. That means that 2 in 3 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 Rhode Island's students.

Rhode Island'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
Bristol	6,995 (100%)	17
Providence	76,736 (79%)	218
Kent	16,556 (67%)	52
Newport	6,995 (64%)	18
N/A	N/A	N/A

Every state has locations where chemical facilities place more students at risk. The first table lists the counties in Rhode Island that have the highest percentage of students attending schools in vulnerability zones. Students in Bristol County are more likely to attend school in a vulnerability zone than anywhere else in the state as its facilities put 6,995 students at risk – 100% 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
East Providence High School	East Providence	2	1,676
Central High School	Providence	2	1,107
Classical High School	Providence	2	1,105
Mt. Hope High School	Bristol	2	1,061
Shea High School	Pawtucket	2	948

View other state factsheets at: [www.foreffectivegov.org/kids-in-danger-zones-state-factsheets](http://www.foreffectivegov.org/kids-in-danger-zones-state-factsheets)

The known vulnerability zones in Rhode Island put a total of 311 schools at risk, some of which are in more than one vulnerability zone. The second table lists the Rhode Island 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 Rhode Island, the schools bearing the greatest risk from such overlapping vulnerability zones include East Providence High School in East Providence, Central High School in Providence, and Classical High School in Providence.

### 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
Univar USA Inc., Providence Branch	Providence	109,694	311
Tanner Industries, Inc.	East Providence	18,192	52
Tiverton Power	Tiverton	2,743	6
City of Newport Station 1 Water Plant	Newport	1,829	8
Lawton Valley Water Plant	Portsmouth	980	1

The facilities listed in the third table place the most students in Rhode Island at risk of a chemical disaster. Univar USA Inc., Providence Branch in Providence, which stores 1,400,000 pounds of chlorine, has 109,694 students studying in its vulnerability zone, thereby putting more students at risk than any other facility in Rhode Island. Tanner Industries, Inc. in East Providence is in second place, with 18,192 students in its vulnerability zone. Any efforts in Rhode Island 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 Rhode Island.

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.

