

Living in the Tacoma Smelter Plume

Questions? Contact us!

Ecology and our county health partner are here to answer your questions. Staff will return all calls by the next business day.

Health Information and Soil Sampling

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

253-649-1853

DirtAlert@tpchd.org

www.tpchd.org/dirtalert



Residential Yard Sampling and Cleanup Program

Department of Ecology

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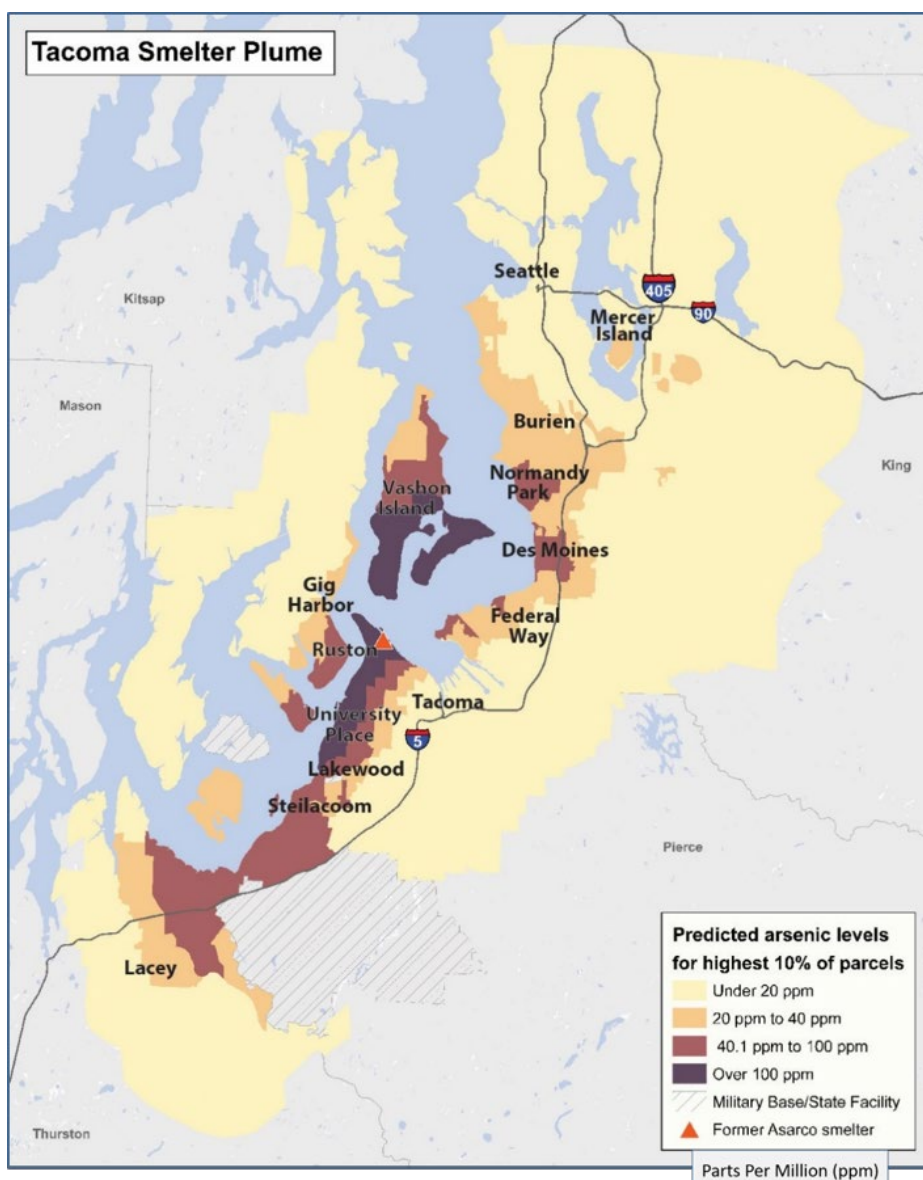
Remediation Manager

360-407-7688, ext. 2

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Arsenic and Lead in King and Pierce Counties

You are receiving this newsletter because you live within the area of the Tacoma Smelter Plume. For nearly 100 years, Asarco operated a copper smelter in north Tacoma. Air pollution from the smelter settled on the surface soil across more than 1,000 square miles of the Puget Sound region. **Arsenic, lead, and other metals remain in the soil because of this pollution.** This newsletter contains important cleanup and public health information for renters, homeowners, and all who live, work, and play in the plume.



Risk to Human Health

People may breathe in dust or accidentally swallow soil containing arsenic and lead. These actions can contribute to health problems especially in children.

- Lead is linked to developmental disabilities in children and may affect IQ
- Arsenic may cause some types of cancers later in life and contributes to heart disease.
- Children under age six are at greatest risk because they put things into their mouths.

There is no immediate danger, but long-term, daily exposure raises the risk of health problems.

What We Are Doing To Protect Your Community

In 2009, the State of Washington received settlement funding from Asarco to expand upon the cleanup work started by the Environmental Protection Agency in the 1990s. With this fund, we lead a cleanup strategy consisting of three programs: Soil Safety, Residential Yard Sampling and Cleanup, and Dirt Alert.

Soil Safety Program

The Soil Safety Program works with licensed childcares, parks, and schools to protect children by performing soil safety actions. We have sampled and tested over 1,000 existing play areas with our partners in local health departments in King, Pierce, and Thurston counties. Of the areas tested, we found over 100 areas with elevated arsenic or lead levels and completed soil safety actions on 90 percent of them. Examples of soil safety actions include removing contaminated soil and replacing it with clean soil, covering soil with wood chips or gravel, and placing signs. You can view Soil Safety Program actions in your neighborhood at the Dirt Alert Map link below. To learn more about the Soil Safety Program, visit

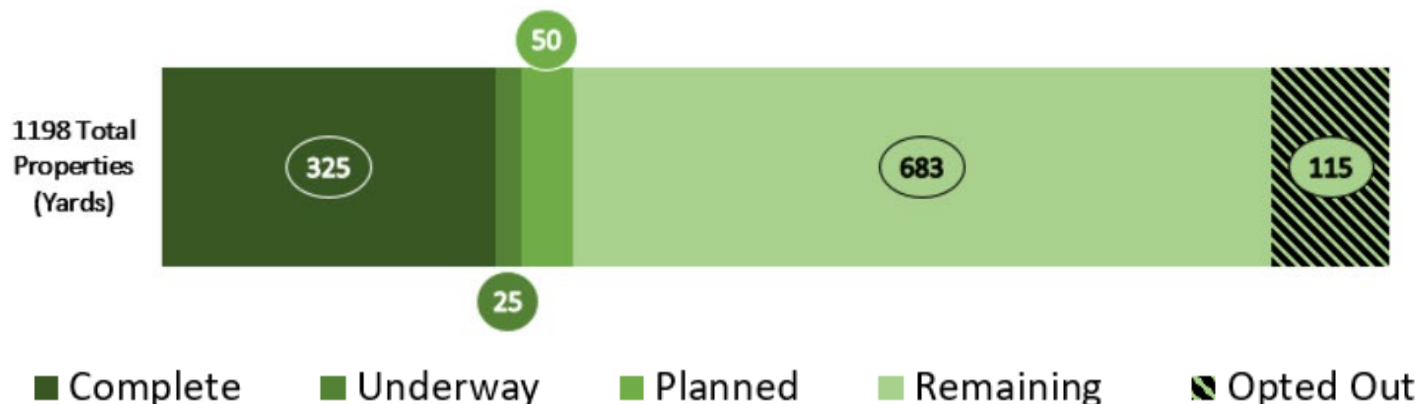
<https://bit.ly/Soil-Safety>



Residential Yard Sampling & Cleanup Program (Yard Program)

In the Yard Program, we test soil at residential properties and replace soil that contains high levels of arsenic or lead at no cost to the owner. **We found 1,198 properties (yards) that qualify for soil replacement, and we replaced soil in 325 of them.** Now, we are working on replacing soil at 25 yards, and planning soil replacement at 50 more in 2022.

Yard Program Progress 2013 to Present



The Yard Program is a **voluntary** program available to **eligible** properties in the Yard Program Service Area. To learn more about the Yard Program, visit <https://bit.ly/Yard-Program>. You can use the Dirt Alert Map link below to determine your property’s eligibility, view available sampling results, and download cleanup records if your property has had soil replaced.

Dirt Alert! Program

Dirt Alert! is our ongoing education and outreach effort with King and Pierce County Health Departments. Dirt Alert! focuses on providing information, resources, and outreach to the communities living in the Tacoma Smelter Plume. The Dirt Alert Map offers an easy and powerful way for you to learn more about the program. The map shows where we tested soil, which properties qualified for soil replacement, and which properties, schools, and parks had their soil replaced.

Visit the
Dirt Alert Map

Scan the QR code with
your smart phone, or
use this link in your
web browser:



SCAN ME

www.ecology.wa.gov/DirtAlert

FREE splinter-free cedar play chips from the Tacoma Smelter Plume Program

Do kids play in your yard? Sometimes kids get dirty when they play outside, and getting dirty could mean exposure to arsenic and lead. You can cover bare patches of soil where kids play to protect them from arsenic and lead. Contact us for a **free Get Covered! toolkit** with instructions and a coupon for two free bags of splinter-free cedar play chips, while supplies last. We'll mail you a toolkit and share how easy and inexpensive it is to Get Covered!



Request your Get Covered! Toolkit and coupon from the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department at <https://dirtalert.info/get-covered>

Have small amounts of contaminated yard dirt you need to dispose of?

You can put small amounts of dirt in your garbage container. Double bag it, push the air out, duct tape the bag shut and put it in your garbage can. If you have questions or if you have more than a small amount of dirt to dispose of, contact us at 253-649-1853.

Translated newsletters available

Để đọc thông tin này bằng tiếng Việt, vui lòng truy cập trang mạng của chúng tôi tại:
<https://dirtalert.info/>

要閱讀中文郵件，請訪問我們的網站：<https://dirtalert.info/>

이 우편물의 한국어 버전을 보시려면 다음 웹사이트를 방문하세요:
<https://dirtalert.info/>

Para leer este anuncio en español, visite nuestro sitio web en: <https://dirtalert.info/>

What Healthy Actions can we practice to protect ourselves?

- **Wash** hands after playing or working outside.



- Don't track arsenic and lead into your home—**take shoes off!**
- If children crawl or play on the floor in your home, dirt can get on their hands and in their mouths.
- **Vacuum** and damp dust often.
- Keep children's toys, teethingers, and pacifiers clean, to keep dirt off hands and out of mouths.



- **Grow** fruits and vegetables in raised beds with clean soil.
- **Wash** all fruits and vegetables before eating.
- **Peel** root vegetables like carrots and potatoes.



- **Cover** bare patches in your yard with grass, groundcover, or mulch.



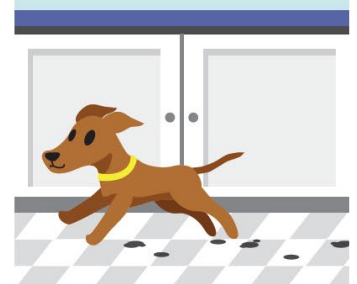
- **Wear** gloves and shoes when you garden. Take them off and wash your hands well when you are done.



- **Wear** a dust mask when mowing in dry conditions.
- **Wet** dry soil when working in garden beds to avoid breathing in dust.



- **Wipe** pet's paws when they come inside, whether wet or dry.





Toxics Cleanup Program
PO Box 47775
Olympia, WA 98504-77

A close-up photograph of a person's hands wearing orange gardening gloves with a white polka-dot pattern on the back. The person is planting a small green seedling into dark, rich soil. A metal garden rake is visible in the bottom right corner. The background is slightly blurred, showing more of the garden and a person's legs in orange shorts.

Spring is here!

And it's time to go outside to play and work in our yards—enjoy working in the garden, planting flowers, prepping the lawn, and maybe pulling a few weeds. This newsletter will update you on our cleanup efforts in the Tacoma Smelter Plume and remind you of Healthy Actions you can take to protect your family this spring

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6790 or email at Justin.Zakoren@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY, call 711 or 877-833-6341.