

# Eastern State Hospital Landfill Cleanup Site

 Public input opportunity

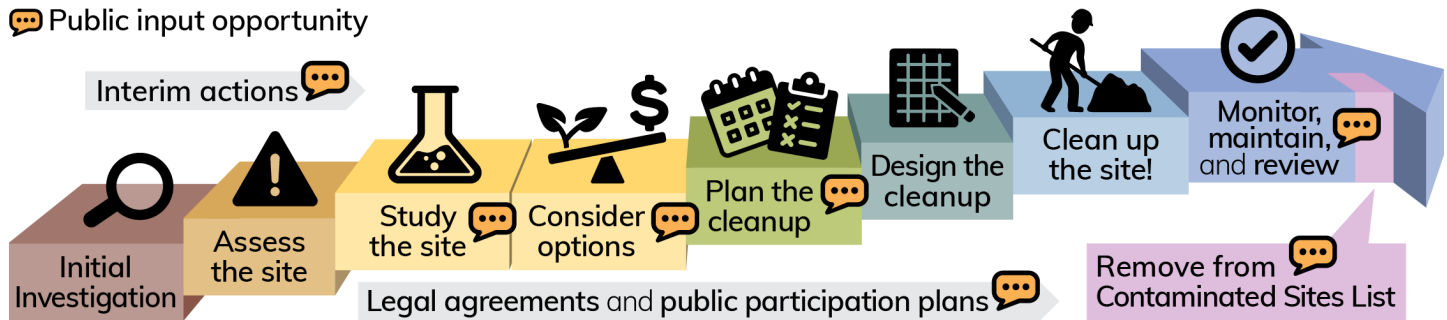


Figure 1. The steps in Washington’s formal cleanup process.

## Comments accepted:

12:00 a.m. October 14 –  
11:59 p.m. November 14, 2024

## Submit comments

### Online:

<https://go.ecology.wa.gov/CommentESH-Landfill>

### Mail:

Kristin Beck, Site Manager  
4601 N. Monroe St.  
Spokane, WA 99205

**Email:** [Kristin.Beck@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Kristin.Beck@ecy.wa.gov)

**Questions:** 509-514-6806

## Review documents

### Online:

<https://go.ecology.wa.gov/ESH-LandfillCleanup>

### In print:

Please contact Erika Beresovoy at [Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Erika.Beresovoy@ecy.wa.gov) or 509-385-2290 if you need print documents.

## Site info

Address: Maple & Pine  
Medical Lake, Spokane County

Facility Site ID: 51358721  
Cleanup Site ID: 16994

## Draft legal agreement and public participation plan ready for public review and comment

You are invited to review and comment on the draft Agreed Order and Public Participation Plan for the Eastern State Hospital Landfill cleanup site.

The order requires the Washington Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to:

- Complete an interim action to delineate and put out an underground fire ignited by the Gray Road Fire.
- Complete a remedial investigation and feasibility study to confirm whether the historic unpermitted landfill has contaminated soil and groundwater and evaluate cleanup options, as needed.

The plan describes how you will be informed and can comment during the cleanup process.

## Putting out the landfill fire

In August 2023, the Gray Road Fire burned in and around the Medical Lake community, including parts of DSHS’s Eastern State Hospital and Pine Lodge property and the area of the landfill. After the Gray Road Fire was out, DSHS staff discovered the landfill was burning underground.

Spokane County Fire District 3 attempted to put the fire out with water. After several months of failed attempts, Fire District 3 decided to leave the fire over the winter, hoping it would burn out in the cooler weather and snow. They reported the fire to Ecology and requested assistance with concerns about air quality and the fire being near West Medical Lake.

In the spring, the fire was still burning despite Fire District 3’s continued efforts. DSHS removed trees, brush, and other ignitable material around the smoldering area.

## Toxics Cleanup Program

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DSHS put clean soil over the smoldering area. This action has been successful at controlling emissions and reducing the risks posed from open flames.

Fire District 3 continues to monitor the situation. We are working with our Air Quality Program to monitor air quality in the vicinity of the landfill. We are regularly monitoring surface temperatures with a drone (Figure 2).

Further steps proposed in the Agreed Order to put the fire out include:

- Continuing to restrict all public access to the site
- Identifying the extent of elevated temperatures or fire in the subsurface
- Developing a plan to excavate and hose down any burning material in metal boxes
- The following actions, if needed:
  - Properly disposing excavated waste and soil
  - Removing contaminated building or other structural material
  - Capping waste
  - Cleaning up groundwater
  - Installing systems to catch runoff to protect West Medical Lake and stabilize the shoreline

### Investigating the landfill post-fire

After confirming the fire is out, DSHS will fully investigate the contents of the landfill and whether they have contaminated soil and groundwater. The feasibility study will evaluate options for cleaning up the landfill and any contamination it has caused.

### Eastern State Hospital landfill history

Washington state has operated the Eastern State Hospital since around 1891. Sometime before 1975, buildings at Pine Lodge were demolished and buried on the property, about 100 feet from West Medical Lake. The landfill appears to mostly contain tiles, concrete, insulation, and other building debris.

When the demolished buildings were buried, no solid waste regulations in Washington applied to this material, and landfilling was standard practice when buildings were torn down.

### Next steps

Ecology will consider all comments received during this public comment period, which may cause changes to the draft Agreed Order and Public Participation Plan. If the documents change significantly, we will hold another public comment period. We will hold an online public meeting if 10 or more people request it.

If no significant changes are made, Ecology will finalize the order, and DSHS will continue working on putting the landfill fire out and then begin the remedial investigation. Figure 2 shows the stages of cleanup and what remains in the process.

### Ecology's cleanup process

The Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) is Washington's environmental cleanup law. It provides requirements for contaminated site cleanup and sets standards that protect people and the environment. Ecology implements the MTCA cleanup process (Figure 1, page 1).

The Agreed Order lays out requirements for the "Interim actions" (putting out the fire), "Study the site" (remedial investigation), and "Consider options" (feasibility study) steps.



Figure 2. Drone image of the landfill taken in June 2024 while monitoring underground temperatures.



Toxics Cleanup Program  
4601 N. Monroe St.  
Spokane, WA 99205



## Eastern State Hospital Landfill Cleanup Site

### Draft legal agreement ready for public review and comment

You are invited to review and comment on the draft Agreed Order and Public Participation Plan for the Eastern State Hospital Landfill cleanup site at Maple and Pine streets on the Washington Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) campus in Medical Lake. The order requires DSHS to put out an underground fire at a historic landfill, determine if the landfill has contaminated soil and groundwater, and clean it up, if needed.

#### Public Comment Period

**12:00 a.m. October 14 – 11:59 p.m. November 14, 2024**

<https://go.ecology.wa.gov/ESH-LandfillCleanup>

#### ADA accessibility

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-407-6831 or email at [ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:ecyadacoordinator@ecy.wa.gov), or visit [ecology.wa.gov/Accessibility](https://ecology.wa.gov/Accessibility). For Relay Service or TTY, call 711 or 877-833-6341.