

Upcoming Yard Cleanups and Outreach in the Ruston/North Tacoma Superfund Area

If you live in the Ruston/North Tacoma Superfund Study Area (map on page 2), you may notice a few changes this year. You will begin hearing from the **Dirt Alert!** outreach program, reminding you about arsenic and lead soil contamination. Yard cleanups have also started up again, continuing past work to remove the contamination.

Why Cleanup Matters

Many yards still have high levels of arsenic and lead in the soil. These toxins pose a long-term health risk, especially for children. We can help you protect yourself and your family, and your yard may even qualify for cleanup!

Who is leading yard cleanup and outreach?

In the past, it was the federal government.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) sampled nearly all yards in the Superfund area and cleaned up the worst contamination. EPA also ran the Asarco Information Center, which housed sampling and cleanup records, and sent out yearly updates.



Now, state and local agencies are taking over.

The Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department (TPCHD) Dirt Alert Program is the new Asarco Information Center. All soil sampling and cleanup files are now available online (see box on right).

The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) is overseeing yard cleanups. In the fall of 2013 Ecology began cleanup work on the next most contaminated yards (more on pages 2-3).

Why the change in agencies?

EPA has finished its planned yard cleanups. Ecology now has funding from a settlement with Asarco to clean up more yards. EPA still oversees the cleanup of the Asarco smelter property (see page 3).

Information for Ruston/North Tacoma Superfund Area Homes

Looking for the Asarco Information Center? It's now part of...

Tacoma-Pierce
County Health
Department

Glenn Rollins
Phone:
(253) 798-3503

E-mail: DirtAlert@tpchd.org

Website: <http://www.tpchd.org/DirtAlert>



All our paper files are now online!

Find your soil sampling results and whether your yard has already been cleaned up at:

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/areispublic/>

You can also contact...

Washington Department of Ecology

Amy Hargrove, Cleanup Manager
Phone: (360) 407-6262

E-mail:

Amy.Hargrove@ecy.wa.gov

Tacoma Smelter Plume website

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/toxics/tacoma-smelter.html>

Facility Site ID #: 89267963

EPA Cleanup Completed (1993–2013)

For nearly 20 years, EPA oversaw soil sampling and cleanup in the Ruston/North Tacoma Study Area. In total, 3,750 properties were sampled and 2,436 of those had soil replacement. Cleanup removed most surface soils with average arsenic levels over 230 parts per million (ppm).

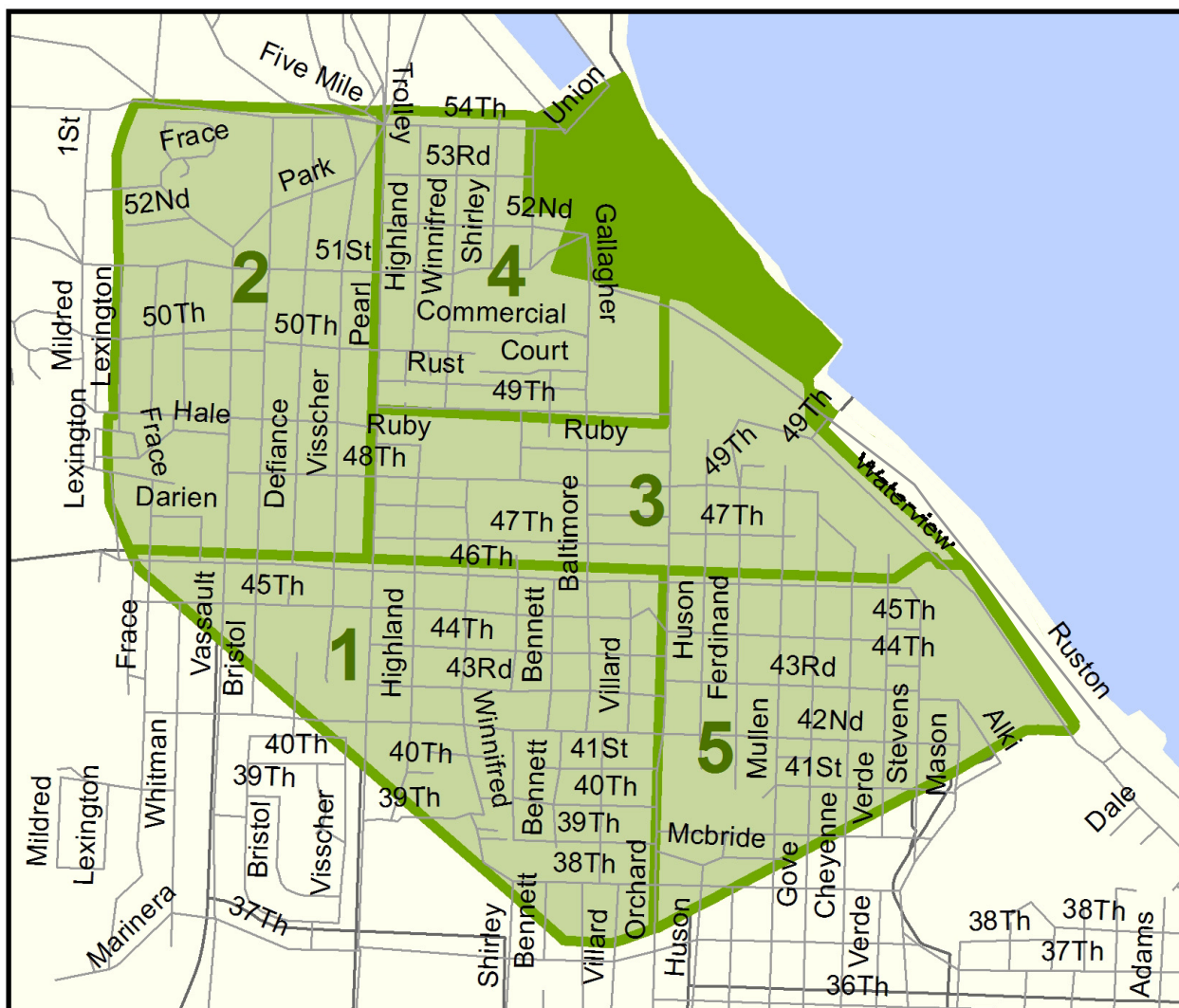
Many yards still have contamination that could pose a health risk. Also, some yards that did have cleanup may have remaining contamination under decks, on steep slopes, or in other hard-to-reach areas.

A settlement from Asarco is funding more cleanup.

Ecology is now offering cleanup for yards with the next highest arsenic levels (see page 3). The Residential Yard Sampling and Cleanup Program (**Yard Program**) will also serve Vashon Island and other areas of Tacoma.

What happens next?

We will send you a letter once we start cleanup in your neighborhood. This program is voluntary and you can decline at any time.



Sequence of Future Yard Cleanups in the Ruston/North Tacoma Superfund Study Area

The cleanup sequence is based on the percentage of yards needing cleanup and the highest remaining arsenic contamination. The dark green area is the former Asarco smelter property.

Cleanup began in the fall of 2013 with eight homes in the Study Area. In 2014 we will clean up more homes in the portion of area 1 west of Pearl Street (see map on page 2). It will likely take eight years to finish all the cleanups in areas 1-5.

How to know if your yard qualifies...

The cleanup decision is based on your existing sampling results and any cleanup already done. To find your results, enter your address in the Arsenic in Soils database at: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/areispublic/>.

Your yard qualifies if:

- The top 12 inches of soil across your whole parcel has 90 ppm average arsenic or higher.
- Any single “subunit” or section of your yard has 200 ppm arsenic or higher.

We will only clean up those subunits with arsenic 90 ppm or higher. Steep slopes, wetlands, and other similar areas will not qualify for cleanup.

In some cases, EPA has placed a thick-enough protective layer of **new soil** over the arsenic contamination and further cleanup is not needed.

Note: The sampling results can be hard to understand. If you need help, contact TPCHD at (253) 798-3503.

Healthy Actions for Your Home

Using Healthy Actions can lower your exposure to soil contamination.

- Wash hands after working or playing outside.
- Take off shoes or use a doormat.
- Vacuum and damp dust regularly.
- Keep toys free of dirt.



Healthy Actions for Your Yard

- Use grass, mulch, or other groundcover over bare patches of soil.
- Wash produce from your garden.
- Peel root vegetables and toss the peelings (do not compost).
- Grow root vegetables and leafy greens in raised beds.



Asarco Smelter Property Cleanup

The federal EPA still oversees cleanup of the former smelter property. The company Point Ruston is cleaning up the site as part of a large housing and commercial development. Cleanup mostly involves capping contaminated soils and sediments.



More Information from EPA

Kevin Rochlin, Project Manager

(206) 553-2106, Rochlin.Kevin@epa.gov


Website: <http://yosemite.epa.gov/R10/CLEANUP.NSF/sites/asarco>



DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

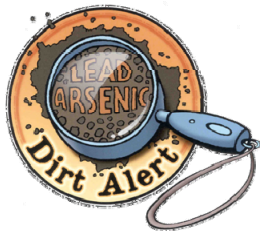
PO Box 47775

Olympia, WA 98504-7775

 Please recycle.

Tacoma Smelter Plume Pierce County, WA

**For residents and property owners:
Yard Cleanups and Outreach in the
Ruston/N. Tacoma Superfund Area**



Facility Site ID #: 89267963

If you need this fact sheet in another format, call reception at (360) 407-6300. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with speech disability, call 877-833-6341.

Ruston/N. Tacoma Superfund Area

Asarco's former copper smelter in north Tacoma emitted arsenic, lead and other heavy metals. These pollutants were carried by the wind and settled on surface soils. Some of the highest levels were in Ruston and north Tacoma.

For the last 20 years, the federal Environmental Protection Agency has been cleaning up yards in this area. See inside to find out what Ecology and your local health department are doing to continue this work.

Join the e-mail LISTSERV:

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/toxics/tacoma-smelter.html> and click on the link on the left called **"Sign-up for updates."**