

# Update on Off-Property Soil Study

## Background

From 1964-1993, Pacific Wood Treating (PWT) operated on the Port of Ridgefield (port) waterfront property at 111 West Division in Ridgefield. PWT pressure treated wood products with a variety of toxic chemicals. Over the past 17 years, the port cleaned up or used a soil cap to cover areas where contamination was found on port property. In this last phase, the Department of Ecology (Ecology) and the port are studying and cleaning up dioxins in the neighborhood east of the port property (off-property area). Ecology and the port are funding the study and cleanup.

In 2009, the port began sampling in right-of-ways to define the extent of contamination in the off-property area. The initial samples were analyzed for multiple wood treating-related compounds such as pentachlorophenol (PCP), arsenic, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), and dioxins. Dioxins were the only contaminant found above cleanup levels. It was clear from the right-of-way sample results that dioxins might also be in yards. The yard soil sampling program started spring 2015.

This FAQ is to update you on the progress the port has made in sampling yards in the off-property area, summarize soil sampling results, and provide information about dioxins. We will update this document and our website when we have more information about the project.

## Yard Sampling and the Off-Property Study

### Q: What is happening now?

**A:** The port and Ecology are continuing to sample the soil in the off-property area to determine the extent of contamination.

- Sample results from yards and right-of-ways have been sent to owners and tenants (see page 3 map of results).
- Sampling shows contamination does not extend north of Maple Street.
- Additional soil samples are needed from Main and Mill Streets. We will start with the right-of-ways and continue until the extent of contamination is found.
- We are attempting to sample all homes within the off-property area
- Cleanup plans for the right-of-ways and yards will be developed with homeowners. Cleanup will begin summer/fall 2016.
- When the extent of contamination has been defined it will be documented in a series of reports that will be available for public comment.

## TOPICS

- Background
- Next steps
- Dioxin information
- Yard soil sampling results map

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

### Site Investigation

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### Public Involvement

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### Health-Related Questions

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### Ecology's Website

<https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/gsp/Sitepage.aspx?csid=3020>

### Accommodation Requests

To request materials in a format for the visually impaired, call Ecology at (360) 407-6300, Washington Relay Service at 711, or TTY 877-833-6341.

Facility Site ID# 1019

Cleanup Site ID# 3020

## Dioxin Information

### Q: What are dioxins?

**A:** Dioxins are a family of chemicals with similar chemical structures and effects on living things. They are byproducts of both human activities and natural processes. They do not break down easily in the environment, and as a result, are found everywhere. Most people are exposed to very low levels of dioxins when they consume food or milk, breathe air, or have contact with dioxin contaminated soils or other materials.

### Q: Where do dioxins come from?

**A:** We believe the elevated levels of dioxins in the off-property area likely came from air-borne dust while Pacific Wood Treating was operating. Dust blew off the port property, was tracked onto roads from truck tires, and came off trucks hauling treated wood on Division St.

Additionally, dioxins are byproducts of both human activities and natural processes. Dioxins can be formed during industrial processes, from home burn barrels\*, fireplaces, wood stoves, and exhaust from diesel engines. Natural sources of dioxins are from forest fires or volcanoes.

Due to changes in environmental regulations and industrial processes, emissions of dioxins in the U.S. have decreased significantly since the 1970s.

*\*Please contact the Southwest Clean Air Agency for more information about the health effects of home burning, and how to reduce your risk. Phone: (360) 574-3058, Website: [www.swcleanair.org](http://www.swcleanair.org).*

### Q: How could I be exposed to dioxins?

**A:** Everyone is exposed to low levels of dioxins because they are present throughout our environment. Most exposure comes from food (especially meat and dairy products). Soil, air, and water usually contribute only a small part of our exposure to dioxins. However, because of the soil contamination, people living in and near the off-property area have a greater potential of exposure to soil dioxins. Exposure in the off-property area could occur by accidentally inhaling (breathing) in dust that carries dioxins or ingesting (eating) soil containing dioxins.

### Q: Could dioxins affect the health of my family?

**A:** Long-term exposure to low levels of dioxins, like those found on the PWT site, does not pose an immediate health risk but may pose a long-term health risk. The odds of developing health problems are different for each person.

Based on data from animal studies, there is some concern that exposure to lower levels of dioxins over long periods (or higher levels at sensitive times) might affect human reproduction or cell development. Dioxins may also have harmful effects on the liver, peripheral nerves, the immune system, and may cause certain types of cancer. The health effects associated with low-level dioxin exposure are still being studied.

### Q: How can I keep my family safe from possible contamination?

**A:** There are several ways you can reduce your exposure to dioxins and other types of soil contamination. These healthy actions include:

- Washing your hands before eating, and after playing, or working outside.
- Removing your shoes before going inside.
- Preventing children from eating dirt.
- Washing children's toys and pacifiers often.
- Damp dusting, mopping and vacuuming often.
- Brush and bathe pets often to keep them clean.
- Eating a healthy and balanced diet and with low to moderate amounts of meat and dairy products.
- Washing fruits and vegetables before eating them, especially if they are grown at home.
- Gardening in raised beds with clean soil.
- Wearing gloves when gardening or landscaping.

### Q: Are the vegetables in my garden safe?

**A:** Fruits and vegetables are okay to eat because they take up only a small amount of dioxins that are in soil. However, since garden soils may cling to the edible portions, it is important to peel or wash produce to remove any possible contamination.

Properties and Right-of-Ways Soil Sample Results



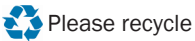


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## **Pacific Wood Treating Ridgefield, WA**

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**Facility Site ID #: 1019**

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Persons with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.

**¿Habla Español?** Si necesita esta información en español, contáctenos a [preguntas@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:preguntas@ecy.wa.gov).

