

Tacoma Smelter Plume (Dirt Alert) Thurston County Update



School and Childcare Soil Sampling Results and Next Steps

The Soil Safety Program

In 2005, the Washington State legislature passed a law to keep children safe from polluted soil within the Tacoma Smelter Plume. The Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) created the Soil Safety Program in response to this law.

The program provides:

- Outreach and education about how to protect children from being exposed to polluted soil within the Tacoma Smelter Plume.
- Free arsenic and lead soil testing for schools and childcares within the service area (see page 3).
- Protective actions for play areas with **elevated** arsenic or lead (see box below), such as removing or covering polluted soil.

What is “elevated” arsenic or lead?



A property has elevated arsenic or lead if the average soil concentration is:

- Arsenic over 20 parts per million* (ppm).
- Lead over 250 ppm.

Or if any one soil sample has:

- Arsenic over 40 ppm.
- Lead over 500 ppm.

**One part per million = one milligram of a pollutant in one kilogram of soil.*

The program serves parts of King, Pierce, and Thurston counties. See page 3 for a map of the Service Area.

The Tacoma Smelter Plume Site



The Tacoma Smelter Plume is a 1,000 square mile area polluted by arsenic and lead from the former Asarco Smelter in North Tacoma. The smelter released these toxic metals into the air during nearly 100 years of operation. Parts of King, Pierce, Thurston, and Kitsap counties are affected.

Please visit Ecology’s Web site (see box to the right) for more information, including maps.

Soil Sampling Results

In 2007, Ecology took soil samples from play areas at twenty-one childcares and ten schools in the north Thurston County portion of the service area. **None of the play areas tested had elevated arsenic or lead.**

Although Ecology did not find elevated arsenic or lead in these play areas, there may still be pollution in nearby areas that were not tested.

Ecology and Thurston County Public Health recommend that schools, childcares, and parents take **soil safety actions** to reduce children’s risk of exposure to potentially polluted soils for every soil exposure (see page 2).

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For more information about the Soil Safety Program, please contact:

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To request brochures, please contact:

Hannah Aoyagi
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Ecology’s Web Site:

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/tacoma_smelter/ts_hp.htm



Thurston County Public Health:

Rachel Laderman
(360) 754-3355 Ext. 7244
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Public Health Web Site:

<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health/ehtsp/index.html>

Facility Site Identification
89267963

Soil Safety Actions

Although Ecology found low levels of arsenic and lead at schools and childcares, we can still teach children about **soil safety actions** such as hand washing and taking off or wiping shoes before coming inside. These actions help protect children at home and everywhere they play.

Educational materials on protecting kids from toxins are available through Thurston County Public Health (see page 1 for contact information).

Ecology has brochures for home soil testing and soil safety actions. These are available on the Ecology Web site or by contacting Ecology staff (see page 1).

Next Steps

Ecology has completed all soil sampling for schools in the North Thurston School District, and plans to sample all licensed childcares within the **Soil Safety Program Service Area** (see map on page 3).

Eleven more childcares will be sampled in 2009. These childcares could not be contacted during the 2007 sampling program, or have opened since that time. Any childcares opening by 2009 will also be evaluated.

What are Soil Safety Actions?

Soil safety actions help reduce exposure to possible toxins in your soil. These actions include:

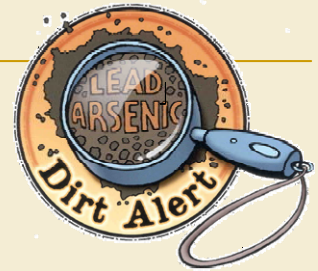
- Hand-washing after playing outside and before eating.
- Using a doormat to keep dirt outside and teaching children to take off their shoes before coming inside.
- Vacuuming and damp dusting regularly to keep children's indoor environments clean.
- Washing toys to keep them free of dirt and dust.
- Covering bare patches of dirt in play areas.

What else is happening with the Soil Safety Program?

Ecology is also working with local health departments in King and Pierce counties to test soils at schools and childcares and clean up soils if needed.

- All school soil sampling was completed in 2007.
- Pierce County childcare sampling will finish in early spring of 2008.
- King County childcare sampling started in Federal Way and Vashon Island, and will move north toward Seattle.
- Ecology is cleaning up polluted soils at schools and childcares. (Facilities with the highest levels of arsenic and lead are being prioritized.)

Ecology's goal is to test soils for arsenic and lead, and clean up polluted play areas, at every school and licensed childcare within the Soil Safety Program Service Area. Ecology and the local health departments will continue to work with schools and childcares to keep children safe!



Soil Safety Program (SSP) Service Area





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 Southwest Regional Office
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**Tacoma Smelter Plume
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Toxics Cleanup Program



**Tacoma Smelter Plume (Dirt Alert)
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The Washington Department of Ecology is sending out information about arsenic and lead soil pollution in north Thurston County. This pollution came from the former Asarco Smelter in Tacoma.

Ecology's **Soil Safety Program** has tested school and child-care play areas and found that arsenic and lead levels were below state cleanup standards.

Why have I received this update?

Ecology wants to inform organizations and agencies that work with children, and parents, schools, and childcares. Although Ecology found low levels of arsenic and lead at schools and childcares, we can still teach children healthy actions to protect them at home

Who can I contact with questions about this publication?

Please contact Hannah Aoyagi, Public Involvement Coordinator, at (360) 407-6790 or by e-mail at haoy461@ecy.wa.gov.

