What Happens During Soil Sampling?

DEPARTMENT OF ECOLOGY State of Washington

Tacoma Smelter Plume **April 2014**

This handout lists the steps for soil sampling in the **Yard Sampling and Cleanup Program**. After you sign up for soil sampling, we will contact you to schedule an appointment.

1. Identify high use areas

We ask questions to identify the areas where you and your family come in contact with the soil often. We call these areas of your yard "high use areas". They may include places like a play area, lawn or garden.

2. Create a map

We determine the size of the property and create a map to record sampling information. On the map, we divide the property into 1-4 units, depending on the size of the yard and number of high use areas.

3. Begin collecting samples

First, we gently push aside any mulch or plant layers to access the top six inches of soil. Then, we bore a small hole with our sampling tool into the top six inches of soil.

4. Collect samples

We pull the tool out of soil to retrieve the sample. For rocky or compacted soil, we will use a trowel to sample instead.

5. Combine the 8 samples

We mix eight samples from one unit to create a composite sample. We then transfer the mixed samples into one jar and label it.

6. Clean off equipment

After we complete sampling in a unit, we clean off the equipment to prevent cross contamination.

7. Bring the samples to the lab

We bring the jars of soil to the lab for analysis. The lab sends us the results within one month.

8. Mail results to homeowner

We mail the sampling results to the homeowner. The homeowner should receive results within two months from the sampling date.

Questions?

Please contact Jill Jacobson at (360) 407-6245 or Jill.Jacobson@ecy.wa.gov. Or visit our webpage at: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/toxics/tacoma-smelter.html.

If you need this document in another format, please call (360) 407-6245. Persons with hearing loss can call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with speech disability can call (877) 833-6341.

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