

Soil sampling coming to the neighborhood east of the Port of Ridgefield waterfront property

Reaching out to confirm/request access agreements to sample soil and determine depth of dioxins contamination

Contacts and information

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[Site webpage](#)¹

Site information

Facility Site ID: 1019
Site Cleanup ID: 3020

What's coming?

- Confirm existing access agreements that are still valid or request new agreements to gather soil samples from yards already identified with dioxins-contaminated soil.
- Sample yards to know the depth of soil contamination and plan for the amount of soil replacement needed.
- Hold public comment period for Cleanup Action Plan and legal agreement to implement the plan.
- Start replacing dioxins-contaminated yard soil and associated rights-of way.

Soil sampling coming to the neighborhood

The Washington Department of Ecology and the Port of Ridgefield's consultant will be reaching out to residents in the neighborhood affected by dioxins-contaminated soil, located east of the port's waterfront property. The port's consultant is Maul Foster & Alongi, Inc. (MFA). The purpose of the soil sampling is to measure the depth of soil contaminated with dioxins.

Homeowners that already signed access agreements to sample their yards will be asked by MFA to confirm the access agreements. MFA will ask owners of recently purchased property to sign new access agreements. Agreement by the homeowner is voluntary.

Starting in 2009, Ecology and the port sampled soil to find the extent of dioxins contamination above cleanup levels in the neighborhood. In 2016 and 2017, soil replacement was completed in 29 properties and associated rights-of-way.

Based on the yard soil sampling done since 2019, we know the remaining extent of dioxins contamination includes 15 residential yards and rights-of way (Figure 1.)

Next steps are to measure the depth of soil contamination in the 15 residential yards and rights-of-way to estimate the volume of replacement soil needed and to design the Cleanup Action Plan. When it's ready, the plan and the legal agreement to implement the plan will be available for public comment. When we have information about the comment period, we will send out a fact sheet with information about the cleanup plan and how to make comments.

After these steps are completed, yard soil replacement will begin on the 11 parcels and rights-of way shown in orange in phase 1 of the cleanup (Figure 1). Soil replacement in the four parcels and rights-of way shown in blue will be completed later in phase 2 of the cleanup.

¹ <https://apps.ecology.wa.gov/cleanupsearch/site/3020>

At this point, timing is not clear for starting phase 1 and phase 2 of the cleanup. This partly depends on when the Cleanup Action Plan is drafted, the comment period is completed, and the plan is finalized.

Funds are available for cleanup of phase 1 properties and rights-of-way. Additional funds will be needed to complete soil replacement for phase 2 properties and rights-of-way.

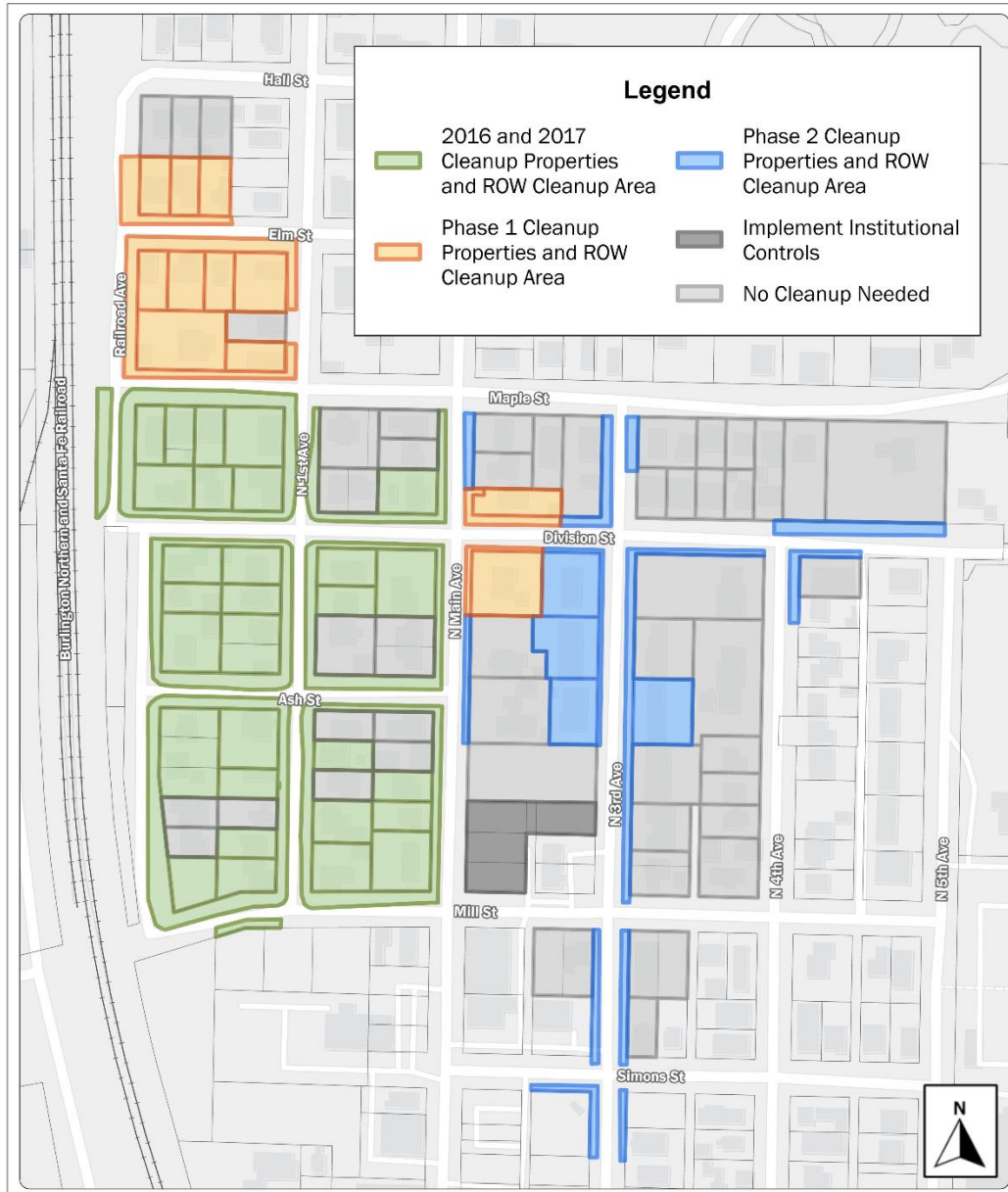


Figure 1. Residential neighborhood affected by dioxins-contaminated soil, located east of the Port of Ridgefield waterfront property. Property owners of parcels shown in orange and blue will be contacted by MFA to confirm or obtain new access agreements to sample soil and determine the depth of contamination. Properties shown in green have already been cleaned up. No cleanup is needed in areas shown in grey. Davis Park (Mill St & N Main Ave) will have institutional controls where contamination is buried.

Background

Between 1964 and 1993, Pacific Wood Treating (PWT) operated on port property at 111 West Division Street in Ridgefield. PWT used several hazardous chemicals to preserve wood, including pentachlorophenol. Commercial pentachlorophenol is a mixture that contains dioxins, which form when pentachlorophenol is made. In 1993, PWT stopped using pentachlorophenol, when the facility closed and declared bankruptcy. In 1996 the port started cleanup of the facility. By 2015, cleanup at the former PWT plant site was completed.

Starting in 2009, Ecology and the port sampled soil in the neighborhood east of the port's waterfront property to find the extent of contamination from PWT that moved beyond the plant's boundary. Dioxins were the only contaminant found in soil above state cleanup levels in the area outside the port property. Elevated amounts of dioxins in soil likely came from airborne dust from PWT operations. Dust may have blown off the port property, been tracked onto roads from truck tires, and come off trucks hauling treated wood through Ridgefield city streets.

Dioxins

[Dioxins](#)² are found throughout the world and they do not break down easily in the environment. Dioxins are made naturally by forest fires and volcanoes. They are also the by-product of burning from fireplaces, wood stoves, and exhaust from diesel engines. Most people are exposed to very low levels of dioxins when they consume food or milk, breathe air, or have contact with dioxins-contaminated soil.

Dioxins do not pose an immediate health risk, but long-term exposure to elevated levels increases the risk of health problems. Young children are more at risk than adults. The health risk comes from accidentally swallowing or breathing in the dust from contaminated soil over a long period. We recommend you protect yourself and your family by practicing healthy actions.

Healthy Actions

Dioxins transported by dust tend to stay in the upper layer of soil until they are disturbed. You can reduce exposure to potentially contaminated soil by doing the following healthy actions.

- Wash your hands after working or playing outside and before eating.
- Remove shoes when you come inside the house.
- Wear gardening gloves while gardening or landscaping.
- Wash food from the garden.
- Vacuum regularly and dust with a damp cloth.
- Wash children's toys often.
- Clean your pets before they enter the home.
- Use grass or other ground covers to help prevent exposure. Landscaping and development can also dilute dioxins in soil.

Contact us

If you wish to be added to our notification list for this cleanup, please contact Nancy Davis at nancy.davis@ecy.wa.gov.

² <https://www.epa.gov/dioxin/learn-about-dioxin>

