

Cleaning Up the Everett Smelter Site

Frequently Asked Questions



Toxics Cleanup Program

September 2010

Why is Ecology meeting with property owners?

Between 1999 and 2007, Ecology successfully removed contaminated soils from properties with the highest concentration of contaminants. In 2011, Ecology will continue to remove soil from areas with identified contamination. Ecology has identified properties with contamination, but needs to complete more mapping and sampling to determine in detail what cleanup activities need to be conducted. Ecology is asking property owners and tenants to sign access agreements so mapping and sampling of yards can be performed this fall.



What caused the contamination?

Emissions from a lead smelter that operated in the early 1900s caused widespread arsenic and lead contamination in northeast Everett. In addition to contamination left behind on the old smelter property, particles from the stacks settled on the surrounding areas, contaminating soil where homes now stand. Contaminants of concern include arsenic and lead.

What is mapping and sampling?

In order to plan for cleanup, maps are needed to identify where samples should be collected. Ecology must analyze soil samples to determine whether cleanup is necessary and how much soil must be removed. When cleanup of contaminated properties is complete, the health risks from the arsenic contamination are removed or minimized.

When will mapping and sampling take place?

Ecology will conduct the yard mapping and sampling this fall.

When do I need to submit the access agreement to allow Ecology to conduct mapping and sampling on my property?

Property owners and tenants should sign and return access agreements to Ecology by **September 24, 2010**. Signed access agreements may be mailed to:

Jerome Cruz
WA Department of Ecology
Toxics Cleanup Program
3190 160th Avenue SE
Bellevue, WA 98008

What if I don't agree to the mapping and sampling?

If you do not want your property mapped and sampled, Ecology will not conduct any work on your property. Declining the mapping and sampling now also means that Ecology will not clean up your property with the other homes near yours. The contamination on your property will remain, and you will be responsible for properly managing the contamination. You will also be required to disclose the contamination if you ever sell your property. If you later change your mind and decide

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to allow clean up on your property, please contact Ecology to see if this is possible. Depending on the progress of cleanup in your area, you may be placed at the end of the cleanup queue.

What will happen during the mapping and sampling on my property?

The **mapping activity** involves the contractor (Science Applications International Corporation, or SAIC) walking around the outside of your home. The contractor may want to discuss landscaping or gardening features on your property. No heavy equipment will be used, and no holes will be dug in your yard. For a small number of properties, the contractor may need to access the bathroom in order to locate the sewer line. SAIC will work with property owners in these cases.

The **sampling activity** requires some heavy equipment to gather adequate soil samples. The contractor uses a small farm tractor with the sampling equipment mounted on the front, in addition to smaller hand tools for more confined spaces. Depending on soil conditions, sampling equipment may leave ruts in yards and tear up some grass. Sampling crews may need to temporarily remove some fencing to gain access. Because some fencing may have to be temporarily removed, pets should be placed in kennels or kept indoors. All fencing will be replaced and yards restored to the original condition after the sampling is completed. Homeowners are expected to clear away debris so the sampling crews can enter the yard.

How will I know when Ecology is planning to map or sample my property?

We will call you to schedule a date in September to map the yard areas of your property. We will inform you of what hours to expect us so you may secure pets or move any equipment that might block our access. Once mapping is complete, we will follow up to schedule a date to sample your yard.

When we do sampling, we will need to know how to gain access to the crawl space under your home. Please be prepared to show the contractors doing the mapping the access point to the crawl space. We also

want to know of any landscaping activities on your property that may have moved large quantities of soil or fill material.

What areas of my property will Ecology need to map and sample?

The mapping and sampling involve only the outdoor yards, crawl spaces, driveways, and landscaping areas. Each yard will be divided into two or more "Decision Units" (DUs). DUs are areas that will be sampled as a unit. Two-inch core samples will be taken to a depth of 36 inches from between 5 and 8 locations in each large DU, depending on the size of the area. Results from these samples are used to decide if the soil within a DU must be excavated and, if so, to what depth.

Ecology will also identify planting beds or gardens that the owner or tenant wishes to keep, but still have sampled. Samples are collected from several locations in each planting bed or garden to a depth of 24 inches. Each 6-inch layer of these samples will be tested to determine the arsenic concentration at different levels. The results for each of the sampling locations are provided on a separate table so that the arsenic concentrations in the landscape areas are known.

Soil is generally taken from four locations in the crawl space. If there is plastic covering the soil, it is pulled back and then replaced. Soil from each of the locations is combined into one sample and tested to provide an average concentration of arsenic in the crawl space.

For more information:

Contact:

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Northwest Regional Office
Toxics Cleanup Program

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