

# Living in the Tacoma Smelter Plume

## Questions? Contact us!

Ecology and our county health partner are here to answer your questions. Staff will respond to your inquiries in a timely manner.

### Health Information and Soil Sampling

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Department

253-649-1853

[DirtAlert@tpchd.org](mailto:DirtAlert@tpchd.org)

[www.tpchd.org/dirtalert](http://www.tpchd.org/dirtalert)



### Residential Yard Sampling and Cleanup Program

Department of Ecology

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Outreach Coordinator

360-485-5340

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Justin Zakoren

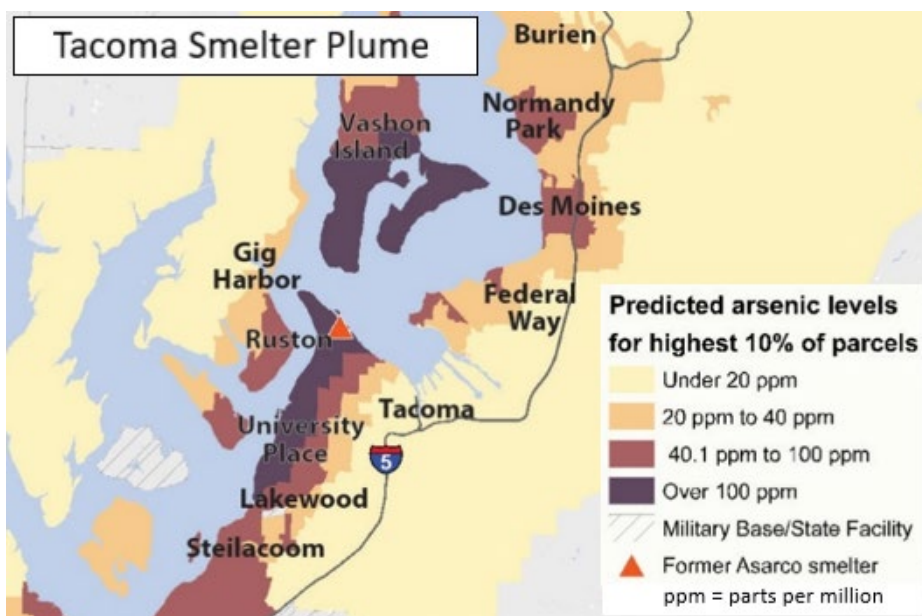
Remediation Manager

360-407-7688, ext. 2

[Justin.Zakoren@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Justin.Zakoren@ecy.wa.gov)

## Arsenic and Lead in King and Pierce Counties

You are receiving this newsletter because you live in the area of the Tacoma Smelter Plume. For nearly 100 years, Asarco operated a copper smelter in north Tacoma. Air pollution from the smelter settled on the surface soil across more than 1,000 square miles of the Puget Sound region. **Arsenic, lead, and other metals remain in the soil because of this pollution.** This newsletter contains important cleanup and public health information for renters, homeowners, and all who live, work, and play in the plume.



## What We Are Doing To Protect Your Community

In 2009, the State of Washington received settlement funding from Asarco to expand upon the cleanup work started by the Environmental Protection Agency in the 1990s. With these funds, we lead a cleanup strategy focused in three areas: Protecting children, residential sampling and soil replacement, and promoting healthy actions community members can take to lower plume-related health risks.

## Soil Safety Program

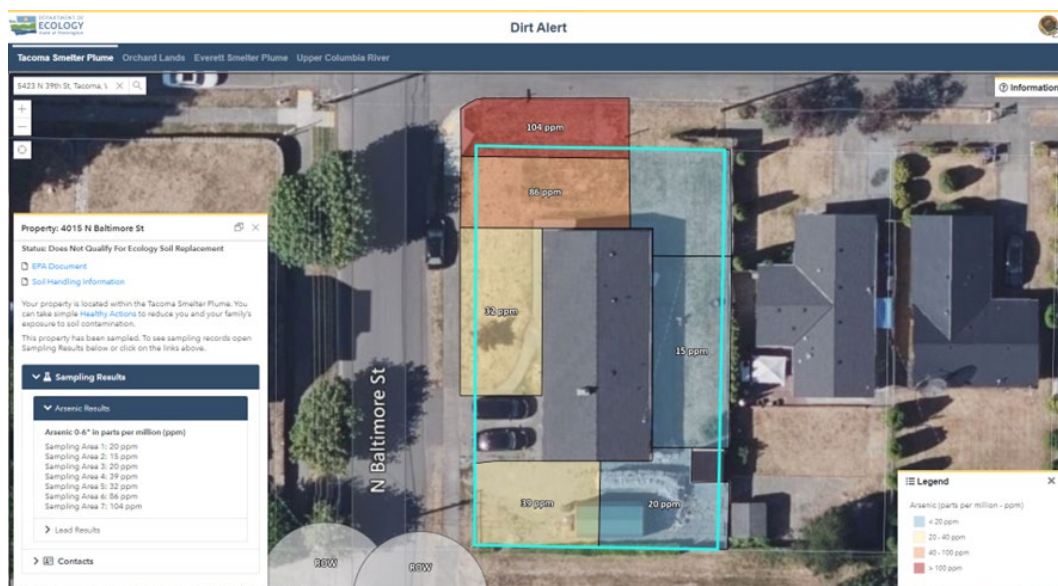
The Soil Safety Program works with licensed childcares, parks, and schools to protect children. To date, we have sampled over 1,200 play areas within the Soil Safety Program service area. Of those sampled, 158 were found with elevated arsenic or lead levels. In response, we have completed over 138 soil safety actions to address smelter contamination at these sites. Visit our online Dirt Alert Map to search for soil safety actions in your neighborhood. To learn more about the Soil Safety Program, visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/Soil-safety-program>.

## Residential Yard Sampling & Cleanup Program (Yard Program)

The Yard Program offers free sampling and soil replacement services to eligible residential properties with the highest soil contamination in the plume. To date, we have found over 1,200 properties that qualify for soil replacement in the Yard Program service area. Nearly 350 of these properties have received soil replacement, and another 48 properties have cleanup under way. You can use the Dirt Alert Map to determine your property's eligibility, view sampling results, and download available cleanup records.

## Dirt Alert Map

The Dirt Alert map is our online, searchable map that depicts areas that may have soil contamination in the Tacoma Smelter Plume. You can search the map to see if a property has sampling results, if it qualifies for soil replacement, and if a property, school, or park has had soil replaced. When available, the map provides links to relevant site



Use the Dirt Alert map to learn more about potential smelter contamination in your neighborhood by visiting: <http://www.ecology.wa.gov/DirtAlert>.

## Are you renting your home? We have resources for you!

- Use the Dirt Alert map to see if your yard has been sampled for arsenic and lead.
- Find simple steps to keep your family safe at <https://bit.ly/tsphealthyactions>.
- Contact [dirtalert@tpchd.org](mailto:dirtalert@tpchd.org) with any questions.

sampling and cleanup documents. The map also provides links to helpful information including sampling and health resources, information for childcare providers, and contact information for further assistance.

## Do kids play in your yard?

Kids should play outside and might get dirty. Since you live in the Tacoma Smelter Plume, getting dirty could mean exposure to arsenic and lead. You can cover bare patches of soil where kids play the most to protect them from arsenic and lead. Find instructions at <https://bit.ly/mu1chw0rk5>. In Spring 2024 we are aiming to offer coupons once again for free splinter-free cedar play chip mulch to cover bare patches of soil where kids play. Waitlist instructions are below.



**Sign up to request your free Get Covered! Toolkit and play chip mulch coupon from TPCHD at <https://dirtalert.info/get-covered>**

## Did summer yard work leave you with soil to get rid of?

Because you live in the Tacoma Smelter Plume, your soil may be contaminated with arsenic and lead. Small amounts of contaminated soil can be disposed of with your garbage pick-up, but large amounts need special consideration. You'll need to take extra precautions to protect your health and the health of workers at the Transfer Center and Landfill. You can find more information and instructions at <https://www.tpchd.org/healthy-homes/dirt-alert-tacoma-smelter-plume/dirt-alert-resources>. Be sure to practice Healthy Actions, like wearing gloves when you work in the soil and taking your shoes off inside. See the included infographic for more Healthy Actions and visit our website for more information <https://bit.ly/tsphealthyactions>.

### Translated newsletters available

Để đọc thông tin này bằng tiếng Việt, vui lòng truy cập trang mạng của chúng tôi tại: <https://dirtalert.info/>

要閱讀中文郵件，請訪問我們的網站: <https://dirtalert.info/>

이 우편물의 한국어 버전을 보시려면 다음 웹사이트를 방문하세요:  
<https://dirtalert.info/>

Para leer este anuncio en español, visite nuestro sitio web en: <https://dirtalert.info/>



## What Healthy Actions can we practice to protect ourselves?

- **Wash** hands after playing or working outside.



- Don't track arsenic and lead into your home—**take shoes off!**
- If children crawl or play on the floor in your home, dirt can get on their hands and in their mouths.
- **Vacuum** and damp dust often.
- Keep children's toys, teethingers, and pacifiers clean, to keep dirt off hands and out of mouths.



- **Grow** fruits and vegetables in raised beds with clean soil.
- **Wash** all fruits and vegetables before eating.
- **Peel** root vegetables like carrots and potatoes.



- **Cover** bare patches in your yard with grass, groundcover, or mulch.



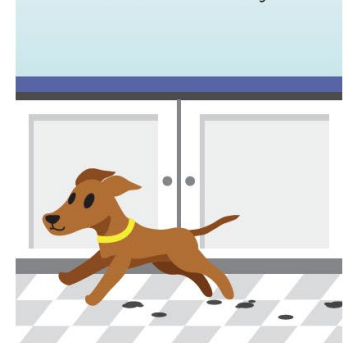
- **Wear** gloves and shoes when you garden. Take them off and wash your hands well when you are done.



- **Wear** a dust mask when mowing in dry conditions.
- **Wet** dry soil when working in garden beds to avoid breathing in dust.



- **Wipe** pet's paws when they come inside, whether wet or dry.





Toxics Cleanup Program  
PO Box 47775  
Olympia, WA 98504-7775



**Arsenic and lead are a risk to those we love.  
Make a plan for healthy actions to reduce the risk.**

To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology at 360-407-6790 or email at [matt.fuller@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:matt.fuller@ecy.wa.gov), or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY, call 711 or 877-833-6341.