



Living in the Tacoma Smelter Plume

Questions? Contact us!

Ecology and our county health partner are here to answer your questions. Staff will return all calls by the next business day.

Health Information and Soil Sampling

Public Health – Seattle & King County

206-477-DIRT (3478)

dirtalert@kingcounty.gov

www.kingcounty.gov/tsp



Residential Yard Sampling and Cleanup Program

Department of Ecology

Matt Fuller

Outreach Coordinator

360-485-5340

matt.fuller@ecy.wa.gov

Justin Zakoren

Yard Program

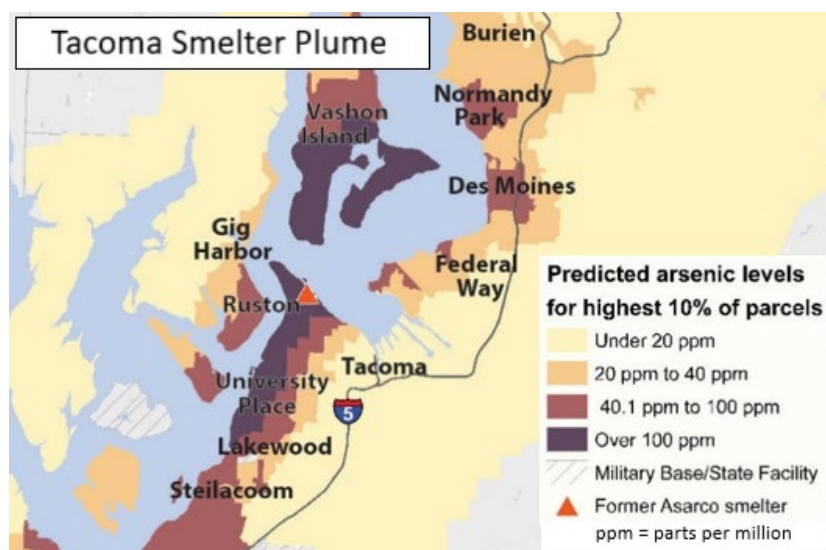
Outreach Coordinator

360-407-7688, ext. 2

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.



Risk to Human Health

People may breathe in dust or accidentally swallow soil containing arsenic and lead. These actions can contribute to health problems, especially in children.

- Lead is linked to developmental disabilities in children and may affect IQ.
- Arsenic may cause some types of cancers later in life and contributes to heart disease.
- Children under age six are at greatest risk because they put things into their mouths.

There is no immediate danger, but long-term, daily exposure raises the risk of health problems.

Soil Safety Program

The Soil Safety Program works with licensed childcares, parks, and schools to protect children by performing soil safety actions. We have sampled and tested over 1,000 existing play areas with local health departments in King, Pierce, and Thurston counties. Of the areas tested, we found over 100 areas with elevated arsenic or lead levels and completed soil safety actions on 90 percent of them. Examples of soil safety actions include:

- removing contaminated soil
- replacing it with clean soil
- covering soil with wood chips or gravel, and
- placing informational signage



Are you involved with a Community Garden?

Community gardens are a critical part of our communities as they provide nourishment for our diets as well as mental, emotional, and social support. It is important to share with community members that although the smelter is gone, arsenic and lead may still be in the soil. We are reaching out to community gardens to support educating their neighbors on these risks through posting signage. Signage can be mounted on a post or fence and provided at no cost to the garden. These signs include information to help residents learn more about the Dirt Alert! program, soil testing at their home, and ways to protect their families. Please contact us if you or your community garden are interested in supporting this work.

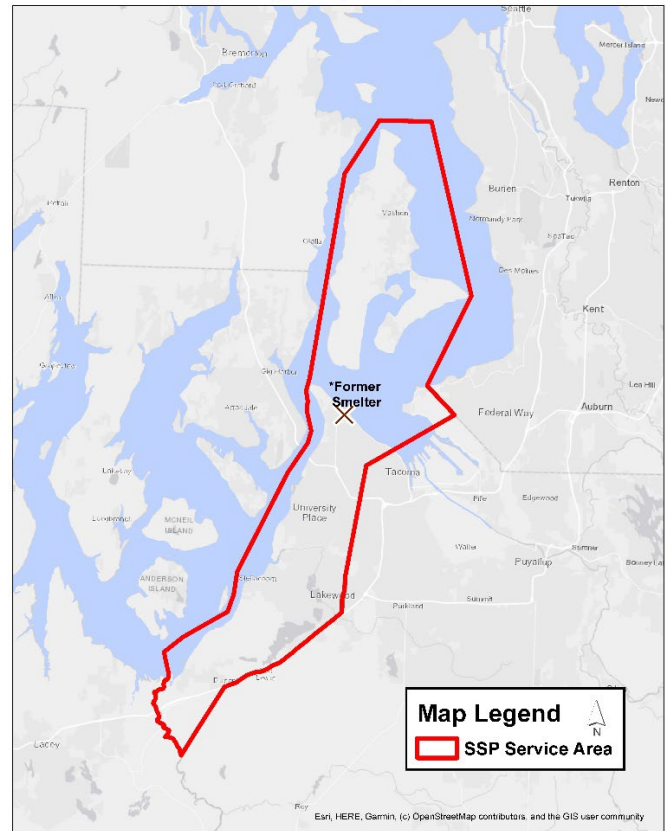
Childcare Provider and Soil Risks

With families and students back in school and work, new childcares are opening for operation. The Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) requires that all new childcares on Vashon-Maury Island sign up for soil evaluation with the Ecology prior to receiving a license to operate. We are here to support new childcares with these requirements.

Ecology provides free sampling services for all new childcares in the Soil Safety Program service area including on Vashon-Maury Island. Want to request sampling for your property? Contact Dirt Alert or Ecology.

You can explore the history of soil sampling in your neighborhood at the Dirt Alert Map link below. To learn more about the Soil Safety Program, visit <https://bit.ly/Soil-Safety>.

Soil Safety Program (SSP) Service Area



Dirt Alert! Program

Dirt Alert! is our awareness program with King and Pierce County Health Departments. Dirt Alert! provides information, resources, and outreach to communities living in the Tacoma Smelter Plume. The Dirt Alert Map shows:

- where we tested soil,
- which properties qualified for soil replacement, and
- which properties, schools, and parks had their soil replaced.

Visit the
Dirt Alert Map

Scan the QR code
with your smart
phone, or use this
link in your web
browser:



SCAN ME

www.ecology.wa.gov/DirtAlert

What does Public Health Seattle King County do?

King County Dirt Alert provides outreach and education through community events and presentations. We offer free educational materials and giveaways for children, parents, teachers, and gardeners in multiple languages. If you have an event or want to schedule a presentation, contact us at 206-477-DIRT (3478).

Learn more about arsenic and lead with our online resources and brochures:



Learn about arsenic and lead in the soil in the Tacoma Smelter Plume and the risk to human health. Included is a list of *Healthy Actions* that you and your family can do to reduce contact with arsenic and lead in dirt.



Reduce your contact with arsenic and lead in dirt while landscaping and gardening: Grow produce in raised beds, wash and peel fruits and vegetables, cover bare patches of soil, remove and replace soil.

Visit the King County website for these and other brochures: <https://tinyurl.com/BrochuresTSP>

Community Partners:

PHSKC is currently working with these organizations to educate communities about the risks of arsenic and lead:



<https://www.hoas.org/>



<https://www.ircw.org/>



<https://www.somalihealthboard.org/>



<https://www.cultivatesouthpark.org/>

Childcare provider or educator? Contact us and use these tools: <https://tinyurl.com/ChildrenKC>

To learn about resident protocol for self-testing soil: <https://tinyurl.com/SoilSampleKC>

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.



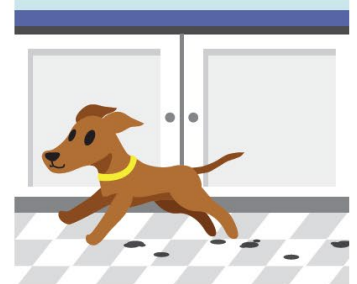
- **Wear** gloves and shoes when you garden. Take them off and wash your hands well when you are done.



- **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.





DEPARTMENT OF
ECOLOGY
State of Washington

Toxics Cleanup Program
PO Box 47775
Olympia, WA 98504-77



Enjoying our yards in the autumn

A lot goes into keeping up our yards in the rapidly changing fall season. Kids enjoy playing in the leaves and exploring the season outdoors. This newsletter will update you on our cleanup efforts in the Tacoma Smelter Plume and remind you of Healthy Actions you can take to protect your family when outdoors and in the soil.



To request an ADA accommodation, contact Ecology by phone at 360-485-5340 or email at matt.fuller@ecy.wa.gov, or visit <https://ecology.wa.gov/accessibility>. For Relay Service or TTY, call 711 or 877-833-6341.