



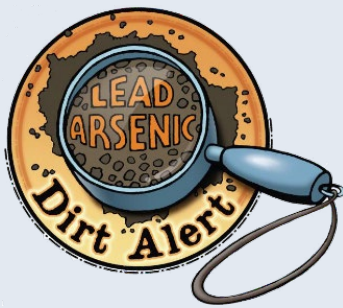
Living in the Tacoma Smelter Plume

Questions? Contact us!

Ecology and our county health partner are here to answer your questions.

Health Information and Soil Sampling

Public Health – Seattle & King County
206-477-DIRT (3478)
dirtalert@kingcounty.gov



Residential Yard Sampling and Cleanup Program

Department of Ecology

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Arsenic and Lead in King and Pierce Counties

You are receiving this newsletter because you live in the Tacoma Smelter Plume area. 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.** The State of Washington received settlement funds from Asarco to fund cleanup activities in three areas: child play areas, residential yards, and promoting healthy actions. This newsletter provides information about all three of these activities.

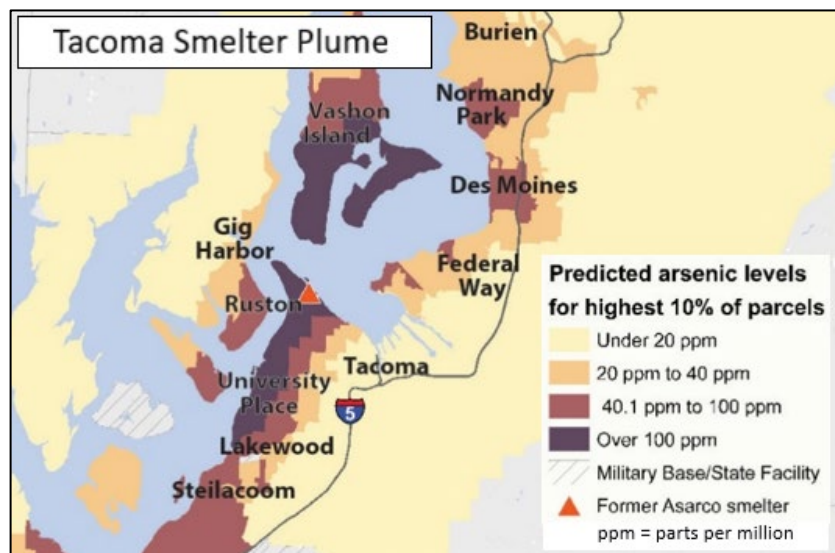
Risks to Human Health

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 contribute to heart disease

Children under age six are at greatest risk because they put things into their mouths and are still growing and developing.

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



Soil Safety Program for Play Areas

The Soil Safety Program works with licensed childcares, parks, and schools to protect children. 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 nearly all 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



Dirt Alert! Program

Dirt Alert! is a program in partnership with the 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:

- which residential properties were tested,
- which properties qualified for soil replacement, and
- which properties, schools, and parks had their soil replaced

Visit our Dirt Alert Map



Scan the QR Code or visit
Ecology.wa.gov/DirtAlert

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 370 of these properties have received soil replacement, and another 25 properties currently have cleanup under way. On Vashon, we've cleaned up 35 of 54 eligible properties. You can use the Dirt Alert Map to determine a property's eligibility, view sampling results, and download available cleanup records





News from King County

Visiting Namaste Community Garden

In early June, Ecology, PHSKC, the International Rescue Committee, and the King County Conservation District met with members of the Bhutanese community at Namaste Community Garden. The Conservation District shared soil sampling results and the agencies shared healthy gardening practices with the Namaste community so they could continue to provide healthy produce for their members. This was the first time working with the Bhutanese community, and it was a welcome collaboration.

Why Native Stories? Podcast

King County Dirt Alert just started a collaboration with Indigenous communities to ensure they are aware of the contamination left by the Tacoma Smelter. The contamination can have a big impact on Indigenous cultural practices. King County Dirt Alert is co-sponsoring a podcast series with United Indians of All Tribes entitled “Why Native Stories? Impacts of Land Contamination.” The series will run on Daybreak Star Radio and will be available starting in summer 2024 on all major podcast platforms.

Free Soil Nutrient Tests for Vashon Residents

King Conservation District (KCD) provides free basic soil nutrient tests for all residents on Vashon Island. Whether growing forage for livestock, gardening, maintaining an orchard or managing a wooded lot for production, proper soil sampling will allow you to:

- Increase plant growth, yields, and quality
- Purchase less livestock feed and fertilizer
- Better utilize manure on your pastures, lawns, and gardens
- Prevent surface and groundwater contamination from over-application of soil amendments

218 Vashon residents have already used soil nutrient testing to improve soil health.

Soil test results include Nitrogen, Phosphorous, Potassium, Magnesium, Calcium, Sodium, Organic Matter, pH, and Cation Exchange Capacity. The laboratory will analyze your soil and provide recommendations specific to your plant needs. Testing for arsenic and lead is also available for a fee.

Visit Kingcd.org/SoilTest for more information.

Dirt Alert: Public Health Seattle-King County

King County Dirt Alert is a Public Health Seattle-King County (PHSKC) program. It 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).

Soil Shop Events

This summer, Ecology and King County Dirt Alert partnered with local organizations to host Soil Shops. These events allow community members to bring soil samples to a central location for testing. Individuals can get immediate results for arsenic and lead levels in their soil. They can also learn more about Healthy Actions their families can take to reduce the risks from contaminated soil. Thanks to Seven Sacred Roots for hosting a Soil Shop in South King County in August. Seattle Tilth will hold one on Vashon-Maury Island this fall. If your organization is interested in hosting a Soil Shop please contact us at 360-999-3186.

Are you involved with a Community Garden?

Community gardens provide nourishment for our bodies as well as mental and social support. It is important for gardeners to understand that although the smelter is gone, arsenic and lead may still be in the soil. We can provide informational signage about our work and the risks of arsenic and lead at no cost that can be mounted on a post. Please contact us at 360-999-3186 if you or your community garden are interested in supporting this work.



What are the health risks from arsenic and lead?

Arsenic and lead can contribute to poor health, especially in children. Children are more sensitive because their bodies are smaller and still developing.

Lead can cause developmental disabilities in children and can permanently lower I.Q.



Arsenic can contribute to cancer, diabetes and heart disease later in life.



What Healthy Actions can we practice to protect ourselves?

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



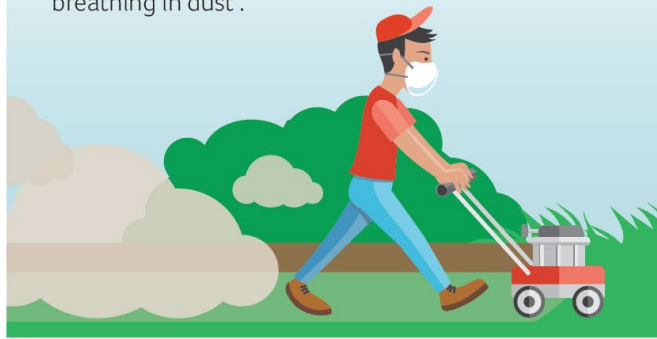
- Don't track arsenic and lead into your home—**take shoes off!**
- If children crawl or play on the floor in your home, dirt can get on their hands and in their mouths.
- **Vacuum** and damp dust often.
- Keep children's toys, teething rings, and pacifiers clean, to keep dirt off hands and out of mouths.



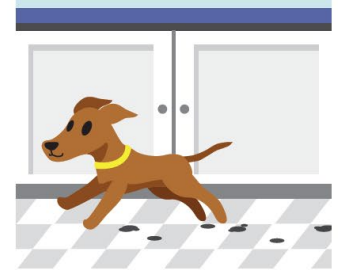
- **Wear** gloves and shoes when you garden. Take them off and wash your hands well when you are done.



- **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.



- **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.





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

Our annual mailer for communities within the Tacoma Smelter Plume area.

Please read on for more information about arsenic and lead contamination. We're also including ways we're working with communities and residents to address the contamination.

Para leer este anuncio en español, visite nuestro sitio web en:

<https://dirtalert.info/>