

## Soil Cleanup on Yards in Tacoma

The Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) is removing contaminated soil on **49** residential yards in Tacoma this summer/fall. This work is part of the **Residential Yard Sampling and Cleanup Program**. The program cleans up arsenic and lead carried by the wind from the former Asarco copper smelter in Tacoma.

### What are the health risks?

There is no immediate danger, but long-term, daily exposure slightly raises the risk of certain health problems. **Arsenic** can cause cancer and **lead** can harm children's developing brains and nervous systems.

The health risk comes from breathing and swallowing dirt contaminated with arsenic or lead. We recommend taking **healthy actions** (above right) to lower your exposure.

### Construction runs August through October of 2014.

Work hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. The work will be completed in phases, with multiple crews working on five to ten yards at a time over the next few months. Construction on an individual yard will take up to two weeks to complete.

### What should I expect during construction?

- Loud construction noise.
- Dump trucks and other equipment coming and going.
- Heavier traffic on North Pearl Street.
- Landscapers visiting regularly to maintain new lawns for several months.

Please call us immediately if you see:

- Dust in the air.
- Dirt or dust off the worksite.

### Questions? Call our hotline (360) 407-7688 (press 2).

Please call if you have any concerns about a yard cleanup site. Staff will return calls about urgent issues within 24 hours. All other calls will be returned on the next business day.



### Healthy Actions

**Please continue to enjoy your yard!** You can use Healthy Actions to protect your family from contaminated soil:

- Wash hands after working or playing outside.
- Take off shoes or use a doormat.
- Vacuum and damp dust regularly.
- Keep children's toys free of dirt.
- Wash fruits and vegetables from your garden.

### More Information

Questions or concerns about soil cleanup on yards in Tacoma:

Tacoma Smelter Plume hotline  
(360) 407-7688, press 2

Amy Hargrove, Department of Ecology  
Phone: (360) 407-6262  
Email: [Amy.Hargrove@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Amy.Hargrove@ecy.wa.gov)

Jill Jacobson, Department of Ecology  
Phone: (360) 407-6245  
Email: [Jill.Jacobson@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:Jill.Jacobson@ecy.wa.gov)

### Health Information and Soil Sampling

Tacoma-Pierce County Health Dept.  
Phone: (253) 798-3503  
E-mail: [DirtAlert@tpchd.org](mailto:DirtAlert@tpchd.org)

Department of Ecology's Tacoma Smelter Plume website:  
<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/toxics/tacoma-smelter.html>

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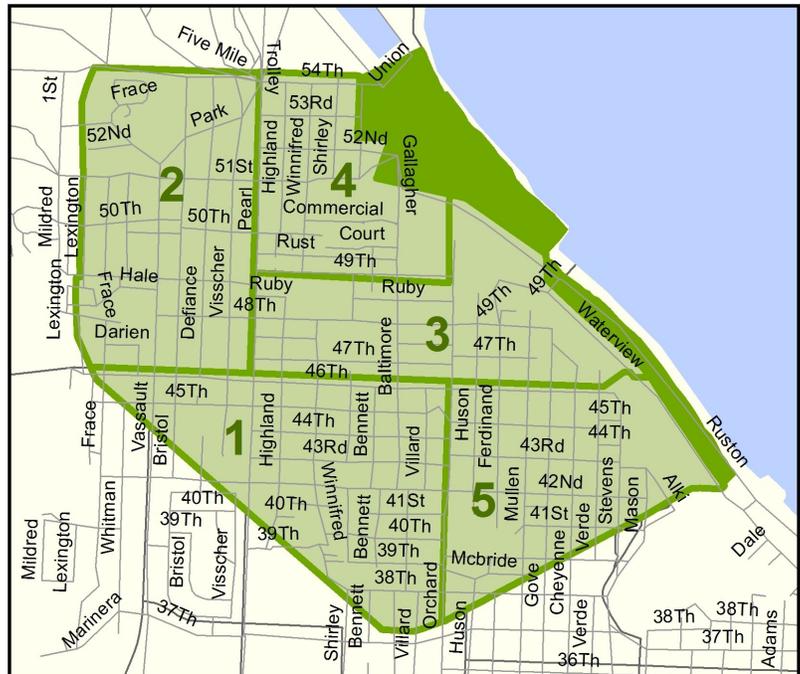
## Why is Ecology doing soil cleanup in the Ruston/North Tacoma Superfund Study Area?

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has cleaned up the worst contamination—arsenic levels of 230 parts per million (ppm) and above.

However, Ecology has a lower action level of 100 ppm. We are offering cleanup for yards where the property has average arsenic above 100 ppm.

## We are cleaning up the most contaminated neighborhoods first.

These 49 yards are in Area 1 in the Ruston/North Tacoma Study Area (see map to right). We selected these yards because they have the highest remaining contamination in the area.



Ruston/north Tacoma Study Area

Over the next several years, Ecology will offer soil cleanup to 650 more homes in areas 2 to 5 of the Study Area. To get your yard scheduled, please respond as soon as you receive your cleanup offer letter in the mail.

## What's in the soil in my yard?

If you live in Ruston or north Tacoma, we may already have sampling results for your yard. To check, visit our online database: <https://fortress.wa.gov/ecy/areispublic/>. If you do not find results on the database, you can sign up for free soil sampling by contacting the Tacoma Pierce County Health Department (see box on front).

## Does my yard qualify for soil cleanup?

Not all yards qualify for free soil removal. We are working neighborhood by neighborhood, through areas 1 to 5, to notify homeowners on whether or not they qualify for soil cleanup. If you have not heard from us yet, it is because we have not reached your yard in our schedule. If you would like to know if your yard qualifies, please call the project hotline (see box on front).

## If I do qualify for soil cleanup, when will cleanup work begin on my yard?

If your yard qualifies for soil cleanup, we will contact you when we reach your yard in our schedule. We are completing cleanup in groups of 50 to 100 homes each summer. It may be a few years until we begin work in your neighborhood. To learn more about the cleanup schedule in your neighborhood, please visit our webpage: <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/toxics/tacoma-smelter.html>.

To request ADA accommodation, call Ecology at (360) 407-6300. Persons with impaired hearing may call Washington Relay Service at 711. Persons with speech disability may call TTY at 877-833-6341.