

EPA to Begin Removal of Lead-Contaminated Soil

American Lead Superfund Site

Indianapolis, Indiana

September 2016

For more information

If you have questions, comments or need more information about the American Lead cleanup, contact these EPA team members:

For technical questions

Shelly Lam

On-Scene Coordinator
317-308-3073
lam.shelly@epa.gov

For general questions

Ruth Muhtsun

Community Involvement
Coordinator
312-886-6595
muhtsun.ruth@epa.gov

Adrian Palomeque

Community Involvement
Coordinator
(312) 353-2035
palomeque.adrian@epa.gov

EPA mailing address:

EPA Region 5
77 W. Jackson Blvd.
Mail Code: SI-7J
Chicago, IL 60604

On the Web:

<https://www3.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/americanlead>

For question regarding lead safety

Karla Johnson

**Marion County Health
Department**
3838 N. Rural Street
Indianapolis, IN 46205
317-221-2211
kjohnson@marionhealth.org

U.S. Environmental Agency will soon begin cleanup of lead-contaminated soil at the American Lead site in Indianapolis. EPA approved an Action Memorandum in August to conduct a time-critical removal at residential properties near the former American Lead facility. Starting in late September, EPA will dig up and remove contaminated soil at properties in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood, then replace with clean topsoil and restore landscaping. The removal action is called “time-critical” in EPA terms because the lead poses an immediate health threat, especially to children’s health, if it is left in the yards. The cleanup will be conducted at no cost to property owners or residents.

Before starting excavation, EPA will sample yards previously identified as having high lead levels to confirm the extent of contamination. Samples will be taken from several different areas of each property. As EPA’s investigation continues, additional properties not previously identified will be sampled as well. Data from all sampling performed will help EPA decide site boundaries and rank which properties will require immediate cleanup. (See figure 1 below for EPA’s current site boundaries.)

Site history

The American Lead site is an area surrounding the former American Lead Facility, located at 2102 Hillside Ave. in Indianapolis. The property was used for industrial purposes dating back to at least the late 1800s. National Lead Industries conducted secondary lead smelting at the property from 1946 to 1965. Historic operations at the smelter contaminated the surrounding community with lead.

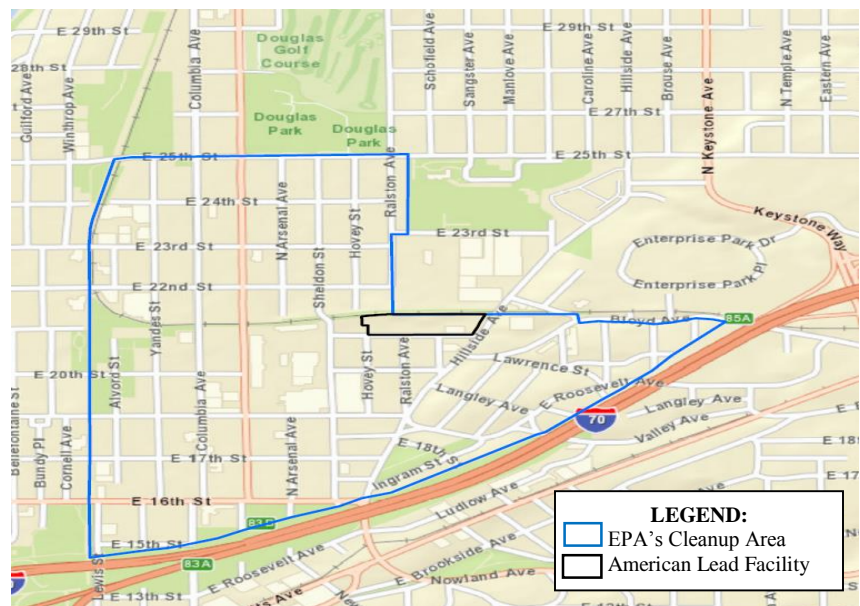


Figure 1: The area outlined in blue is the area that will be part of the lead cleanup. The former American Lead facility is outlined in black.

The site is located in the central part of Indianapolis in the historic Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood. EPA's cleanup area is roughly defined as 25th Street to the north, Ralston Avenue to the northeast, along the railroad to Interstate 70 (I-70) with I-70 forming the southern border, and the Monon Trail to the west. The boundaries were determined by sampling conducted by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management in 2015. The area includes a mixture of industrial, commercial, residential properties, including single-family homes, vacant lots, community centers, playgrounds, parks, churches, and schools.

Community involvement is a vital part of EPA's cleanup effort at the American Lead site. During our study of the area, many residents and community members have voiced their concerns on how an EPA cleanup will affect their lives and community. Below are answers to some of the frequently asked questions EPA has received.

How can I get my property tested?

If you live in the cleanup area, contact one of the EPA representatives on the front page of this document to request an access agreement. Mail the access agreement to us and we will contact you to schedule sampling.

My property was cleaned up previously. Could it have been recontaminated?

It is possible. Since the 2005-2007 cleanups, numerous vacant houses have been demolished. During demolition, lead-contaminated soil could have been exposed and redistributed to nearby properties. If your property was previously cleaned up but you are concerned that it could have been recontaminated, we will retest it at your request.

Why do my neighbors have high levels of lead in their soil but my yard doesn't?

Most of the contamination is the result of contaminated slag or soil from the American Lead smelter. Not all yards received this contaminated material from the smelter.

Who is paying for the cleanup? Why isn't the company that owned the smelter involved?

EPA is paying for the immediate cleanup of contaminated yards because the contamination threatens human health. EPA will attempt to recover its costs from the company that owned and operated the smelter.

What types of properties is EPA cleaning up?

Properties eligible for cleanup include single- and multi-family dwellings, apartment complexes, schools,

day-care centers, community centers, playgrounds, parks, greenways, and any other areas where children may be exposed.

Can I refuse permission for EPA to sample or clean up my property?

Yes. We need your permission to do work on your property.

I rent my home. How can I get it tested?

EPA needs the property owner's permission to sample or perform a cleanup. If you rent, please contact your property owner or talk to an EPA representative. We can contact your property owner on your behalf.

How will EPA decide which properties to clean up first?

EPA will first perform cleanups at properties where sensitive populations are present. Sensitive populations include children 7 years old and younger and pregnant or nursing women.

Will my entire yard be dug up and cleaned?

EPA will take samples from your front and back yard as well as any other uncovered areas. Taking several samples from different spots on your property helps EPA determine if and which part of your yard needs to be cleaned.

How long will it take for my yard to be cleaned up?

It generally takes 2-3 days from start to finish. This includes removing contaminated soil, replacing it with certified clean soil, and restoring your grass and landscaping.

Can I be in my home during the cleanup?

Yes. During the cleanup, EPA will take every precaution to prevent the excavated material from spreading. We will use water to keep dust down. Additionally, we will be testing the air during the cleanup to make sure it is safe for your family and neighbors.

Will EPA sample my home if I'm outside of the boundary?

The federal laws that give EPA authority to investigate and clean up contamination only allow the Agency to clean up what can be attributed to a facility, in this case American Lead and National Lead. It is possible that as EPA's investigation continues the site boundaries may grow. If your home becomes a part of the cleanup area, then EPA will sample your property.

Is there any way to make sure my property is not contaminated if I'm not in the cleanup area?

Yes. Contact the Marion County Health Department, 3838 N. Rural St. or call 317-221-2211.

How is lead harmful to my health?

Lead can affect almost every organ and system in your body. Young children and pregnant or nursing women are most vulnerable to the effects of lead. As children grow and develop, the lead can accumulate in their bodies over time, where it is stored in bones along with calcium. During pregnancy, lead is released from bones as maternal calcium and is used to help form the bones of the fetus.

What can I do to protect myself from lead?

Doing simple things like regular housekeeping and good hygiene can help you and your family lower the risk of lead exposure. You can also talk to your pediatrician, general physician, or local health agency about lead safety. You can also visit <https://www.epa.gov/lead/learn-about-lead#effects> for more information.

How do I know if I've been exposed to lead?

The only way to know if you have been exposed to lead is to be tested. Your doctor or the Marion County Public Health Department can test your blood for lead.



Street view of homes in the Martindale-Brightwood neighborhood

The project has two key objectives

TO PROTECT CHILDREN'S HEALTH

- Unhealthy levels of lead are found in the soil in many residences in the neighborhoods surrounding the former American Lead facility.
- Lead ingestion in young children can result in damage to the nervous system and mental impairment.

TO MINIMIZE IMPACT TO THE COMMUNITY

- All work will be done free of cost to property owners.
- Work will be done on weekdays, during business hours only.
- EPA will work with property owners/residents to schedule cleanup dates that are convenient for them, as much as possible.
- The project has been designed to avoid major disruption to the community and to the environment.