



# EPA To Begin Final Cleanup of Neighborhood Site

**South Minneapolis Residential Soil Contamination Site**  
Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 2009

## Open houses scheduled

EPA will hold an open house-style session in August to give residents an opportunity to talk to EPA representatives one-on-one. You may stop by during the hours listed below and ask questions about the final cleanup work or about the site in general. No appointment is needed.

### Wednesday, Aug. 26

6 – 8 p.m.

Matthews Recreation Center  
2318 29<sup>th</sup> Ave. S.

## Contact information

Cheryl Allen  
Community Involvement  
Coordinator  
312-353-6196  
allen.cheryl@epa.gov

Tim Prendiville  
Remedial Project Manager  
Superfund Division (SR-6J)  
EPA Region 5  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590  
312-886-5122  
prendiville.timothy@epa.gov

Call EPA Region 5 toll-free  
800-621-8431  
8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., weekdays



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 is set to begin the final phase of cleanup at the South Minneapolis Residential Soil Contamination Superfund site. This work will remove arsenic-contaminated soil from 487 residential properties and will take about 2 ½ years to complete. The cleanup work will be paid for entirely by stimulus money from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act so property owner will pay nothing. The properties scheduled for work in this final phase include nine locations that were not cleaned up in previous stages plus an additional 478 properties containing lower arsenic levels but still at concentrations posing unacceptable health risks to residents.

The plan calls for removing shallow soil with arsenic levels higher than 25 milligrams of arsenic per kilogram of soil, or 25 mg/kg. Once the shallow soil has been removed, EPA will take soil samples to show that only low amounts of arsenic remain. If soil one foot deep still contains arsenic higher than 95 mg/kg, workers will dig deeper. Once all contaminated soil is removed, workers will fill in the yards with clean earth and restore the ground to its original condition as near as possible. If EPA is unable to remove all of the contaminated soil, some form of deed restriction or notice may be placed on the property. The intent is to make sure future owners or workers are aware the contamination is present.

EPA will hold an open house style meeting to give residents an opportunity to talk about the site. See the box on the left for details.

## Access agreements

EPA sent out around 475 letters and access agreements to property owners where arsenic levels in their yards were high enough to include in the next cleanup phase. If you received this letter and access agreement and have not returned the signed form, EPA is asking that you send it as soon as possible. Access agreements should be sent to EPA's Tim Prendiville (address in the box on the left).

## Cleanup process

If your property is scheduled to be cleaned up, you would have received a letter from EPA letting you know your land is one of the 487 locations selected for this phase. Before any cleanup begins, EPA will meet with you to discuss your specific property and walk over it with you so you can identify special landscaping features and any other issues you might have. During this meeting, information will be gathered so a drawing of the property can be made. EPA will also videotape and photograph the property to document its original condition and give you a copy of that material, which can be used in case there is any question about how your place was restored. We will also create an inventory of any plants that would need to be replaced. We will then come back right before the work is scheduled to start to go over our property drawing with you and get your approval to begin.

Once the actual cleanup begins, it usually takes about a week to finish and put the property back to its original condition as near as possible. How long it takes largely depends on the size of the property. Weather can also play a role, but we will try our best to not start if we know bad weather will interfere. Flowers, trees, plants and other vegetation that need to be replaced will be exchanged with nursery stock so they may not be as mature as the original greenery.

We appreciate the importance of your mature trees and will do everything we can to prevent damage. If we have to remove soil from around a tree we will dig by hand so the roots will be undisturbed. This is something we can discuss with you during our initial meeting. If for some reason a mature tree must be removed we will have to replace it with a nursery-grade tree.

During the cleanup process, EPA will not excavate any driveways or sidewalks and will dig at least one foot away from foundations. Fences may need to be temporarily moved to do the work, but we will avoid that if possible. If a fence has to be moved, it will be returned to its original location, and if serious damage occurs the fence will be replaced.

EPA will test the new soil that replaces the ground removed from your yard before it is brought to your place to make sure it is clean. The soil will be tested for arsenic and also for a complete list of other pollutants such as metals and organic contamination. A copy of those results will be provided to you in the closeout letter for your property.

The contaminated soil is taken by truck to an off-site landfill for disposal. We do not know yet which landfill will be used for this work, but the facility will be designed to safely hold contaminated material.

When we are done with the work we will give you a closeout letter that says the property cleanup is complete. It will contain sample results and a drawing showing the area that was excavated. It will also contain sample results for the clean soil that was used to backfill the excavation. The closeout letter will also ask you to confirm the property has been adequately restored.

## For more information

Documents about this site can be viewed online at [epa.gov/region5/sites/cmcheartland/](http://epa.gov/region5/sites/cmcheartland/), and at the following locations:

Green Institute  
2801 21<sup>st</sup> Ave. S.  
Suite 100  
Minneapolis

Minneapolis Police Department  
Attn: Carla Nielson  
1201-B E. Franklin Ave.  
Minneapolis

Minneapolis Central Library  
300 Nicollet Mall  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Minneapolis

Minneapolis Public Library  
East Lake Branch  
2727 E. Lake St.  
Minneapolis

## About the South Minneapolis site

The South Minneapolis Residential Soil Contamination site study area covers about 1,480 acres including residential, commercial, industrial and municipal properties. The area is largely residential, with much of the housing built from the early 1900s through 1930s. The site has been investigated for residential arsenic contamination, some of which may have drifted through the air from the former CMC Heartland Lite Yard property located in the neighborhood.

Between 1938 and 1963, arsenic-based pesticides and herbicides were blended and distributed at the CMC Heartland property by Reade Manufacturing. From 1963 to 1968 another company manufactured, shipped and stored herbicides from the CMC Heartland plant property. In January 1968 a storage tank containing liquid sodium arsenate ruptured and released around 3,000 gallons. The plant operator covered the spilled material with six inches of sand to try to limit its impact.

Arsenic contamination was discovered in 1994 by Minnesota Department of Transportation during reconstruction of the Hiawatha Avenue corridor adjacent to the CMC Heartland plant site. By 1996 the plant site was covered with crushed asphalt and clean dirt to keep dust from blowing off-site. Soil cleanup work was done in 2004 and 2005 at the plant site to remove highly contaminated soil and to minimize human exposure to polluted shallow soil. Since then the plant site has been redeveloped with a light industrial building.

In 2004 the state asked for EPA's assistance to manage contamination in the surrounding neighborhood and the Agency sampled more than 3,500 yards. EPA found 206 properties with arsenic levels that posed an immediate threat to people and between 2004 and 2008, EPA cleaned up 197 of those lots.

This next phase of work will complete all the soil cleanup work related to the arsenic contamination from the former plant site.



# Environmental Health Information

## How to reduce accidental intake of contaminated soils

August 2009

Minnesota

Department of Health

### How can you be exposed to contaminants in soil?

While it is possible to breathe in contaminated dust, accidental ingestion of contaminated soil is a greater concern. Accidental ingestion of contaminated soil may occur when normal activities leave soil on our fingers and hands, increasing the chance that contaminants could be swallowed. Children who live and play in a contaminated area can have more exposure than adults. Preschool-age children are more likely to be exposed because of their frequent hand to mouth activity. Dust from contaminated soil can be tracked into the house on shoes and can end up on indoor surfaces and toys.

### What can you do to prevent or reduce contact with contaminants?

#### *Keep hands clean.*

- ❖ Wash children's hands and faces, especially before eating and bedtime. Keep their fingernails short and clean. Clean toys or objects that children put in their mouths.
- ❖ Adults should wash their hands before feeding their children, smoking, eating or drinking.

#### *Try to reduce soil dust in the house.*

- ❖ Take off your shoes when you enter your home to prevent tracking contaminated soil inside. Store outdoor shoes at entryways. Remember that pets can carry in soil dust on their paws.
- ❖ Vacuum carpeting, rugs and upholstery. Regular vacuuming will keep dust from accumulating.
- ❖ Dust with a damp cloth.
- ❖ Scrub tile and linoleum floors and wash windowsills.
- ❖ Keep windows closed on windy days, at least on the windward side of the house. This will keep dust from blowing inside.
- ❖ Wash gardening gloves and clothes separately from family clothes.
- ❖ Change the furnace filter every 3 months.

#### *Reduce outdoor activities that stir up dust.*

- ❖ Seed or sod bare areas in your yard. Bushes and grass help keep soil in place and reduce the amount of dust in the air.
- ❖ Minimize mowing over areas of sparse lawn during periods of dry weather.
- ❖ Avoid dirt biking, mountain biking, ATV use or any other recreational activities that disturb the soil.
- ❖ Avoid digging or disturbing soil. If it cannot be avoided, keep the soil moist to reduce making dust.

#### *Take special care when gardening or harvesting.*

- ❖ Use gardening gloves (leather is better than cloth) when gardening to keep contaminated dust out from under fingernails and reduce the chance that soil on fingers and hands could be swallowed.
- ❖ Keep garden tools and gloves in one area of the garage or shed.
- ❖ Periodically rinse tools off.
- ❖ All plants used for traditional or cultural purposes should be rinsed off carefully, even if they will not be used as food.
- ❖ Use the same tips when harvesting wild vegetation (use gloves and rinse tools).

#### *Give children a safe play area.*

- ❖ Build a sandbox with a bottom and fill it with clean sand. Cover it when not in use to keep out contaminated dust.
- ❖ Find other places for children to play.

*Prepare food carefully to reduce the amount of contaminants.*

- ❖ Thoroughly wash and peel all home-grown vegetables before eating or cooking them. Or, if possible, grow vegetables in a raised garden bed filled with clean soil.
- ❖ Rinse the dust off of wild vegetation carefully before using.

**For more information contact:**

MDH/Site Assessment and Consultation: 651-201-4897 or 800-657-3908, press "4" and leave a message.

To request this document in another format, call 651-201-5000, TDD: 651-201-5797 or The Minnesota Relay Service at 800-627-3529.

This information sheet was prepared in cooperation with the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease



Minnesota Department of Health • Division of Health • Site Assessment and Consultation Unit

651-201-5000, or 800-657-3908, press 0 / [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

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Agency

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Superfund Division (SI-7J)  
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Chicago, IL 60604-3590

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Postage and Fees Paid  
EPA  
Permit No. G-35

Return Address Requested

**SOUTH MINNEAPOLIS NEIGHBORHOOD SOIL CONTAMINATION SITE:  
EPA to Begin Final Cleanup**