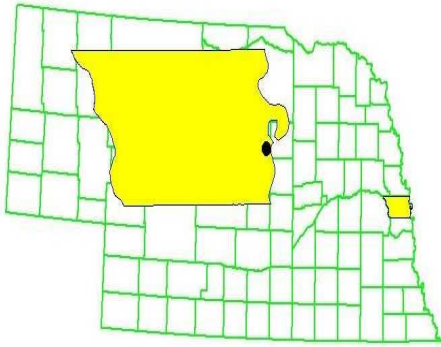


**OMAHA LEAD**  
**NEBRASKA**  
**EPA ID# NESFN0703481**

**EPA Region 7**  
**City: Omaha**  
**County: Douglas**  
**Other Names:**

**03/26/2010**



## **SITE DESCRIPTION**

The Omaha Lead Site, which is located in Douglas County, Nebraska, includes surface soils present at residential properties, child care facilities, schools, and other residential-type properties in eastern Omaha. The proposed final boundary of the potentially impacted area covers 17,291 acres (27.0 square miles) where approximately 125,880 residents live, including 14,117 children under 7 years of age (2000 U.S. Census data).

In 1998, the Omaha City Council solicited assistance from EPA in addressing problems with lead contamination in the Omaha area, prompted by clean-up activities at the ASARCO facility. ASARCO was a lead-refining plant which operated from the early 1870's until 1997 and was located on approximately 23 acres on the west bank of the Missouri River in downtown Omaha. During the operational period, lead and other heavy metals were emitted into the atmosphere through smoke stacks and fugitive emissions from plant activities. The pollutants were transported downwind in various directions and deposited on the ground surface.

### **Site Responsibility:**

This site is being addressed by federal action.

### **NPL LISTING HISTORY**

**Proposed Date:** 02/24/2002

**Final Date:** 04/30/2003

**Deleted Date:**

## **THREATS AND CONTAMINANTS**



Soil testing of approximately 35,000 residential properties has revealed widespread lead contamination over eastern Omaha. The lead contamination is found in surface soils that are accessible and pose a risk to children six years of age and younger. In addition, the Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) has been screening children for lead poisoning for approximately 25 years. This blood lead screening has shown that several zip codes in close proximity to the former lead refinery have a high occurrence of elevated blood lead levels in young children. Lead is classified by EPA as a probable human carcinogen and is a cumulative toxicant.

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## CLEANUP APPROACH

### Response Action Status

EPA began testing residential soils in March 1999. The first test results revealed that a number of residential properties, including those being used to provide child care services or where children that have elevated blood-lead levels reside (EBL properties), had surface soil contamination above the EPA's 400 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg) or parts per million (ppm) screening level. EPA began a time-critical cleanup in August of 1999 at child care facilities and EBL properties that have soil contamination at or above the 400 mg/kg screening level. In August 2002, removal activities were expanded to include highly contaminated residences. Originally, highly-contaminated properties were designated as those with lead contamination at or above 2,500 mg/kg, which was revised downward to 1,200 mg/kg in November, 2003, with the publication of new guidance (Superfund Lead-Contaminated Residential Sites Handbook). The cleanup involves removing contaminated soil from a property, replacing it with clean soil, and restoring the yard with sod.

EPA proposed adding the Omaha Lead Site to the National Priorities List (NPL) on February 24, 2002. The comment period closed on April 29, 2002. The site was added to the NPL on April 30, 2003.

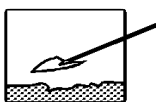
In December 2004, EPA issued an Interim Record of Decision (ROD) that expanded the cleanup to address residences with soil-lead levels exceeding 800 mg/kg. The ROD also included public health education, and actions to stabilize exterior lead-based paint where it threatens to recontaminate replacement soils and high-efficiency cleaning of home interiors where soil remediation is performed. EPA issued a Final Record of Decision for the site on May 13, 2009, which lowered the soil lead to 400 ppm and retained the elements of the interim remedy. The interior dust response was modified to provide a high efficiency household vacuum distribution program and health education. Through the 2009 construction season, soil remediation had been completed at more than 5,600 properties at no cost to the property owner. Soil remediation has proceeded at a record pace for the National Superfund Program, completing soil cleanups at more than 5,000 residential properties in 5-year period 2005-2009. Exterior lead-based paint stabilization is being performed by both EPA and the City of Omaha Lead Hazard Control Program and has been completed at more than 2,600 properties to date.

In October 2008, EPA completed a draft Final Remedial Investigation, including an updated Baseline Human Health Risk Assessment, and a draft Final Feasibility Study. The updated risk assessment confirms the findings of previous studies which concluded that soil lead levels exceeding 400 ppm pose an unacceptable risk to children at the Site. Under the final remedy, approximately 10,000 additional residential properties exceeding 400 ppm are eligible for soil remediation, and testing of these properties will be performed to determine eligibility for exterior lead-based paint stabilization and interior dust response. Public health education activities continue under the final remedy.

EPA has tested more than 35,000 residential properties since March of 1999. The results indicate that lead contamination can be found in residential soil over a broad area in eastern Omaha. Approximately 40 percent of the tested residential properties have soil at or above the 400 mg/kg screening level. The wide distribution of lead contamination over eastern Omaha indicates that long-term management of the risk posed to children will be necessary.

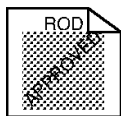


**Site Studies:** A Final Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study have been completed at the site. Remedial Investigation results were used to prepare a Baseline Human Health Assessment for the site.



**Initial Actions:** A time critical removal action was performed. Approximately 200 child care facilities and homes of children with elevated blood lead levels and 200 homes with highly elevated soil lead levels had contaminated soil removed and replaced with clean soil.

#### **Initial Actions:**



**Remedy Selected:** A Final Record of Decision was issued by EPA in December 2009 which expands the scope of the ongoing response action to include excavation and soil replacement at residential properties exceeding 400 ppm. The final remedy also includes high-efficiency interior cleaning and exterior lead-based paint stabilization at properties where the continued protectiveness of the remedy is threatened.

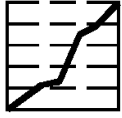
#### **Site Studies:**

#### **Site Facts:**

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## **ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRESS**

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Community awareness of the potential health effects of lead on children and the steps which residents can take to help reduce exposures to lead has increased as a result of EPA's activity at this site. The potential exposure of children to lead-contaminated soil, especially where children have shown elevated blood-lead levels, has been eliminated at more than 5,600 residential properties. The Douglas County Health Department has measured a steady decrease in the frequency with which it identifies children with elevated blood-lead levels.

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## **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

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A Community Advisory Group (CAG) has been active at this site since its formation in January 2004. In 2006, a 501(c)(3) organization was formed to work in concert with the CAG, with an emphasis in seeking funding partners and comprehensive solutions to the lead issues EPA does not have the authority to address. EPA oversight personnel are present in the community and have an established office and local phone number, which is accessible to the public. EPA also has a toll-free number to the Regional Office in Kansas City, Kansas, promoting easy access for the public.

At the request of the community, EPA opened two local Public Information Centers in north and south Omaha in November 2005. These centers are staffed with local public information specialists who perform public outreach and provide health education materials relating to the Omaha Lead Site, as well as other potential sources of lead exposure and other EPA programs. EPA awarded a \$50,000 Superfund Technical Assistance Grant to the Lead Safe Omaha Coalition in 2005.

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## SITE REPOSITORY



EPA Public Information Center  
(north)  
3040 Lake St.  
Omaha, Nebraska 68111  
(402) 991-9583

Superfund Records Center  
901 N. 5th St.  
Kansas City, KS 66101  
Mail Stop SUPR  
(913)551-7166

EPA Public Information Center  
(south)  
4911 S. 25th St.  
Omaha, Nebraska 68107  
(402) 731-3045

W. Dale Clark Library  
215 South 15th Street  
Omaha, Nebraska 68102  
(402) 444-4800

Washington Branch Library  
2868 Ames Ave.  
Omaha, Nebraska 68111  
(402) 444-4849

South Omaha Branch Library  
2302 M St.  
Omaha, Nebraska 68107  
(402) 444-4850

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## REGIONAL CONTACTS

**SITE MANAGER:**

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:**

**PHONE NUMBER:**

Bob Feild/SUPR/R7/USEPA/US  
feild.robert@epa.gov  
(913) 551-7747

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT  
COORDINATOR:**

**PHONE NUMBER:**

**E-MAIL ADDRESS:**

Debbie Kring/OPA/R7/USEPA/US  
(913) 551-7725  
kring.debbie@epa.gov

**STATE CONTACT:**

**PHONE NUMBER:**

Stacey Stricker  
(402) 471-2326

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## MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION

<b>STATE:</b>	NE
	07ZY
<b>CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT:</b>	2
<b>EPA ORGANIZATION:</b>	SFD-FFSE

## MODIFICATIONS

<b>Created by:</b>	Donald Bahnke/SUPR/R7/USEPA/U S	<b>Created Date:</b>	07/11/2002 12:49 PM
<b>Last Modified by:</b>	Debbie Kring/R7/USEPA/US	<b>Last Modified Date:</b>	03/26/2010 11:10 AM

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