



# Annual Sampling and Cleanup Update

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## Residential and Business Sampling and Analysis Complete

In 2002, EPA established a program to inspect all properties in Libby – the *Contaminant Screening Study*. Approximately 3500 properties were inspected in 2002 and 2003. Those requiring further investigation were revisited in 2003 and 2004.

Sampling results are intended to classify properties as:

- (1) definitely needing cleanup
- (2) needing more investigation
- (3) likely not needing cleanup

Over 16,000 soil samples were collected and the results, including soil sample results, are now available. All home and business owners whose properties were sampled should receive a letter with their sample results by Summer 2005. The letters will inform property owners if cleanup is necessary at their property. Many residents have already received these letters.

Based on current information, EPA estimates that 1200 to 1400 residential and business properties will need some type of cleanup. The total number depends upon the final cleanup standards set by EPA. EPA intends to propose these standards later this year.

Additional sampling at a small number of properties in 2005 is intended to provide the final pieces of information needed for EPA to establish final cleanup levels and procedures.

This specialized sampling will help answer specific questions about the effectiveness of the cleanup such as: “How clean are homes several months after the cleanup?” and “How much exposure are people getting from asbestos in soil?”

## Cleanup Progress

The former vermiculite processing plants and other public areas have been cleaned up. EPA has completed cleanup of a total of 353 residential and commercial properties. Of these, **170 properties were completed in 2004.**

To date, 92% of the people completing a survey after cleanup said they were treated with courtesy and respect, well-informed about the work, impressed with the health and safety precautions and glad they had the work done.

In addition to cleanups, EPA continued inspections to gather the detailed information needed to design each unique cleanup of attics, home interiors and outdoor areas. Depending on the final budget, EPA expects to complete at least 170 cleanups in 2005.

## Economic Benefit

EPA has encouraged contractors to hire locally, whenever possible. During the peak field season, EPA contractors had approximately 90 full-time employees, 61 of whom were from Libby or Troy. During Fiscal Year 2004, EPA estimated that approximately \$8.2 of cleanup money has gone directly into the Libby-area economy in the form of salaries, benefits, per diem, housing, purchases, contracts, and rentals.

## New Contract Reduces Cost

As of fall 2004, EPA began using a new contract to conduct cleanups. Initial results of the contract were encouraging. Cleanups were completed at an average cost of about \$35,000, the lowest cost since the inception of the project. We will continue to evaluate the contract and its effect on local labor, quality of work, and costs.

