

Updates from the East Palestine Train Derailment Emergency Response

EAST PALESTINE, OH (May 22, 2023) –Norfolk Southern continues to excavate of the north track. Waste shipments are expected to continue into June. EPA and Norfolk Southern continue to conduct air monitoring in the work zone and in the surrounding community. Perimeter air monitoring stations are located around the rail work zone.

The phone number changed to 330-775-6517 and will be answered during the Welcome Center hours.

While the cleanup is ongoing, EPA is reviewing work plans for further assessment and cleanup that will ensure community safety in the years that come.

Response By the Numbers *(as of May 22, 2023)*

- 47,495 (estimated) of solid waste shipped
- 18,580,350 gallons (estimated) of liquid waste shipped
- 632 private well samples collected
- 1,031 EPA assistance line calls received
- 825 visitors received at the Welcome Center

This Week

Norfolk Southern continues to excavate the north track area. Crews are investigating the ‘centerline’ area between the north and south tracks to determine if additional excavation is needed.

EPA will share a table of educational materials and activities for children with the East Palestine Memorial Public Library at the East Palestine Street Fair on May 24-27.

What to Expect Next Week

On June 6, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., EPA will host an information session on public health with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) at the First United Presbyterian Church in East Palestine. Residents are encouraged to submit questions in advance using EPA’s [East Palestine Train Derailment Local Area Resident Inquiry web form](#).

At the derailment site:

- Contaminated soil and waste stockpiles are covered overnight and when not in use.
- Vapor suppressants are used to address odor and vapor issues associated with excavation activities.
- EPA continues to document all excavation activities, including soil confirmation sampling prior to restoration.
- Trains are operating in both directions on the southern track.

In the greater community:

- EPA has hosted a series of informational sessions for community members on soil, air, private well water testing, surface water, and operations. The sessions are typically held weekly at the Way Station and First United Presbyterian church at 109 W. Rebecca St. in East Palestine, and between 20-40 community members attended per session.
- Air monitoring continues at 23 locations around the community. Review of data supports air monitoring trends that air quality has remained below screening levels.
- The Welcome Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and closed on Sunday. The Welcome Center will be closed May 24-29 due to the East Palestine Street Fair and Memorial Day, but staff will be available on the phone line.

Air Quality

EPA continues to review preliminary and final air sampling data, which supports air monitoring trends that air

quality has remained below screening levels. EPA's Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer (TAGA) bus is off-site for the next several days and mobile Proton Transfer Reaction – Mass Spectrometry (PTR-MS) vehicles are serving as a replacement with the same capability that the TAGA employs.

Soil Removal at the Derailment Site

On May 18, from 6 to 7 p.m., EPA hosted an information session on the derailment site clean-up activities. During this session, EPA provided an overview of mainline soil removal plan, an update on soil cleanup status, and a forward look at full-site assessment. The meeting was recorded and will be available on EPA's website.

Excavation of contaminated soil around the northern track began in late April and continues. Excavated soils are shipped off-site for proper disposal, and clean dirt is brought in to fill the excavated areas.

As clean-up work transitioned to the north track, the asbestos-containing material (ACM) was discovered in a pre-existing debris pile while preparing to excavate soil. The debris pile was located just east of Brave Industries. The material was transite, which is not a friable form of asbestos, so it's unlikely that asbestos fibers were a significant threat of release to the air. However, since the material was broken, a certified asbestos remediation contractor was brought on-site to manage the removal. The transite and associated debris/soil were placed in 11 sealed roll-off boxes for disposal. Each roll-off box contains roughly 10 tons of material and about 5% of that material is transite. The ACM and affected debris will be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations.

Liquid Waste Removal

Wastewater is collected to ensure water does not leave the derailment site or staging piles of contaminated soil. Wastewater is generated after rain falls on contaminated soil and is collected from cleaning and washing trucks before they leave the site.

Full-Site Characterization

EPA is reviewing Norfolk Southern plans to conduct extensive assessment work in areas surrounding the impacted tracks, including potentially impacted waterways.

Soil Sampling

Sampling associated with Phase I of the Preliminary Residential/Commercial/Agricultural Soil Sampling Plan is complete. Sample results have been provided to property owners over the phone and in writing. Preliminary EPA results and validated Norfolk Southern results are posted on EPA's website: [EPA and Norfolk Southern Residential, Commercial and Agricultural Soil Sampling Results](#). Validated EPA results are expected within the next two weeks.

Drinking and Groundwater Sampling

Ohio EPA continues to conduct drinking water testing of East Palestine municipal water wells on a weekly basis, as well as weekly sampling of wells located between the municipal wells and the derailment site. These wells were installed to monitor for potential groundwater contamination that could be moving toward the municipal wells.

Water Quality Monitoring

Norfolk Southern continues daily surface water sampling of affected waterways under Ohio EPA oversight. Sediment samples were collected and are anticipated to be received during the next operational period.