

143619

Palmerton Zinc Site

Palmerton, Pennsylvania

ORIGINAL
(Red)

EPA Region III



May 1996



EPA RESUMES HOME CLEANUPS

On May 6, EPA resumed its home cleanup program in Palmerton. EPA will be testing homes, inside and out, as requested by the residents, for lead, cadmium, and zinc from May 20 through May 24. Results should be available within three weeks of testing. EPA is continuing this home clean-up program, started in 1994, after stopping work in the fall because of the drought. EPA has begun cleanup at 80 homes and completed cleanup at 64 homes.

The purpose of the home cleanups is to remove lead, cadmium, and zinc contamination from inside homes and to reduce the possibility of exposure outside. EPA's clean-up actions are determined by where the contamination is and how much is present. For example, indoor contamination may require carpet replacement or just a thorough cleaning depending on how much contamination is present. Outdoor contamination usually requires some soil treatment and a grass cover to reduce exposure to contaminants in the soil.

Cleanup Eligibility

Not all homes are eligible for cleanup; they must meet specific criteria. The first criterion is whether young children (six years old or younger) either live or spend a lot of time at the residence. The main way that people can be exposed to the contaminants is by ingesting or breathing contaminated dust. Young children are more likely to be exposed since they play on the floor or on the ground. In addition, lead, one of the primary contaminants, is more harmful to children than adults.

The second criterion is the level of lead and cadmium found at the residence. Homes with

young children and high levels of lead or cadmium are automatically eligible for cleanup. EPA decides whether to clean homes with small children and moderate levels of lead or cadmium on a case-by-case basis.

How to Reduce Exposure to Contaminants

There are several steps that residents can take to reduce exposure to contaminants. Since the main exposure route is through dust, clean and vacuum with a fresh bag often. Also, keep outside areas covered with grass or plants so that as little soil as possible is exposed. The Zinc Corporation of America's (ZCA) Neighbor Helping Neighbor program provides dirt, fertilizer, and seed free of charge to Palmerton residents. For more information, contact the Zinc Environmental Information Center at 826-8764.

EPA is Scheduling Cleanups Now

EPA is currently scheduling cleanups for 38 homes. EPA had planned several of the cleanups for last year but had to postpone them because of the drought. Many people also requested cleanups over the winter. To find out if your home qualifies for cleanup or to request sampling, contact the EPA representatives listed below.

Michael Towle
On-Scene Coordinator
826-5074
or
Larry Brown
Community Involvement Coordinator
U.S. EPA, Region III (3EA30)
841 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 566-5527 or (800) 553-2509



AR102211

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO THE INTERIM REMOVAL ACTION (HOME CLEAN-UP) PROCESS



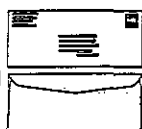
Step One: EPA develops a list of locations to be sampled from residents' requests. EPA then samples soil, interior dust, and/or paint at these residences, depending upon the owner's wishes. If you would like EPA to sample your home, please call (610) 826-5074.



Step Two: Resident responds to a survey questionnaire indicating ownership of the property, the presence of young children in the household, and interest in the Interim Removal Action.



Step Three: EPA evaluates the results of the survey samples and determines if the property is eligible for the clean-up program. Although EPA considers many factors in determining eligibility, the presence of young children and high levels of lead and/or cadmium at the residence are key factors. Cleanups may be limited to address situations of lesser contamination.



Step Four: EPA mails the analytical results and analysis of eligibility to the residents. EPA then coordinates with the owners of the eligible properties to perform the cleanup. The property owner must agree to the cleanup before EPA schedules the cleanup.



Step Five: EPA schedules the cleanup of interested and eligible properties. EPA reviews the clean-up process with the homeowner and, if necessary, discusses how to accommodate the owner's requests.



Step Six: If the property owner wants the interior of the house cleaned, EPA provides the property owner with packing materials and information on how to prepare the home for cleanup. Possessions should be placed in boxes but do not need to be removed from the house.



Step Seven: If carpeting will need to be replaced because of contamination, EPA hires an appraiser to prepare an estimate of the replacement cost. EPA and the homeowner sign and notarize a replacement agreement which requires EPA to pay the owner for the replacement. EPA will deal with any property damage which may occur on a case-by case basis.



Step Eight: EPA then conducts a survey of asbestos-containing material to ensure that EPA does not unknowingly disturb this material during the cleanup. However, EPA will not address asbestos-containing material.



Step Nine: If interior cleaning is performed, EPA requests that families temporarily relocate from the premises during the interior cleanup (approximately four days) to prevent any unnecessary exposure and to facilitate a prompt cleanup. EPA reimburses families for meals and lodging while out of the house.



Step Ten: EPA cleans the interior and/or exterior of eligible properties. The family may return when the interior cleaning is done.

Note: If requested EPA will sample paint for lead, but will not address lead-based paint during cleanup activities.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Region III

841 Chestnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Official Business
Penalty for Private Use
\$300



Printed on recycled paper

AR102212