

# EPA To Begin Cleanup of Hegeler Residential Area

**Hegeler Zinc Superfund Site**  
Vermilion County, Illinois

August 2015

## You are invited

EPA will hold two open house sessions for the Hegeler Zinc site **Tuesday, Aug. 18**, from **1 to 3 p.m.** and **5 to 7 p.m.** at the David S. Palmer Arena, 100 W. Main St., Room 127, Danville.

## For more information

If you want to know more about the cleanup contact:

*For technical questions:*

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Remedial Project Manager

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*For general questions:*

**Teresa Jones**

Community Involvement Coordinator

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jones.teresa@epa.gov

*For media questions:*

**Francisco Arcaute**

Public Affairs Specialist

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arcaute.francisco@epa.gov

You may call EPA toll-free:

800-621-8431, weekdays, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

## Website:

[www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/hegelerzinc/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/hegelerzinc/index.htm)

Documents about this site can be viewed at the following location:

**Danville Public Library**  
**319 N. Vermilion St.**

In early September, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is set to begin the cleanup of properties in the Hegeler neighborhood as part of the investigation associated with the Hegeler Zinc Superfund site. U.S. EPA refers to this phase of the cleanup as Operable Unit 3, or OU3. The federal Agency often divides complex cleanup projects into smaller parcels called operable units. This work will remove lead- and arsenic-contaminated soil from around 39 residential properties and should last about 10 weeks. The cleanup is at no cost to homeowners.

U.S. EPA considers a property eligible for cleanup if soil lead levels are at or above 400 parts of lead per million parts of soil, expressed as parts per million, or ppm. For arsenic, the number is 35 ppm. In the metric system, ppm is called milligrams per kilogram, or mg/kg, and you may see that measurement used in the official documents. EPA officials believe the proposed cleanup plan will prevent harmful exposure to contaminated soil, especially for children.

The federal Agency will hold two open-house style meetings to give residents an opportunity to talk about the site (*see box, left*). No formal presentation will be made.



*The Hegeler Zinc site is south of Danville, in east-central Illinois.*

## Cleanup process

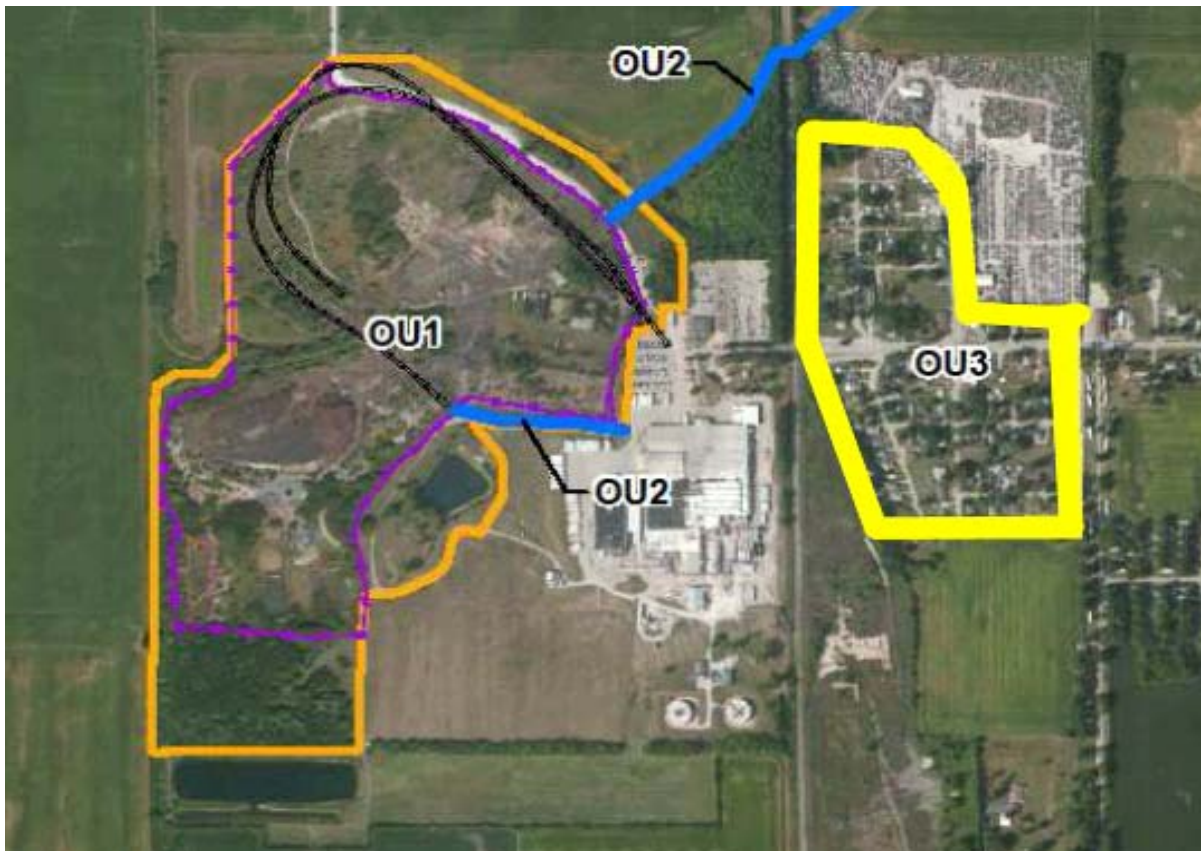
If your property is scheduled to be cleaned up, you would have received a letter from U.S. EPA letting you know your yard is eligible. The mailing also contained an access agreement that needs to be signed and returned by the property owner. Before cleanup can begin, U.S. EPA officials will meet with 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. The U.S. EPA representative will also videotape and photograph the property and give you a copy to document its original condition in case there is any question about how your place was restored. We will also create an inventory of any vegetation that would need to be replaced. We will return right before the work is scheduled to start to go over the 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 can delay the start if we know bad weather will interfere. Flowers, trees and plants that need to be replaced will be exchanged with nursery stock so the new vegetation may not be as mature as the original greenery.

If we have to remove soil from around a tree, we will dig by hand to minimize disturbance to the roots. This is something we can discuss with you during our initial meeting. If for some reason a mature tree must be removed, we will replace with a nursery-grade tree. The contaminated soil is taken by truck to Hegeler Zinc's former zinc smelting facility and stockpiled there to be handled as part of the future cleanup on the section called OU1. The OU3 soil stockpile at OU1 would be covered with vegetation and watered for growth and stabilization. In addition, the soil stockpile would be inspected and maintained to control soil erosion and sediment runoff until OU1 is cleaned up.

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

When we are done with the work, we will give you a closeout letter that says the property cleanup is complete.



*The aerial photo shows the former Hegeler Zinc plant. The bold yellow line shows the residential area (OU3) that will be cleaned up.*

## About the site

The 100-acre Hegeler Zinc site is about 3½ miles south of Danville in an unincorporated area of Vermilion County. The site is in a rural area, bordered by farmland on the west and north. An automobile salvage yard is about 1,000 feet northeast of the site.

During its years of operation, Hegeler Zinc produced various grades of zinc slab and rolled zinc products, as well as sulfuric acid and cadmium. The company also operated its own local coal mine to charge its smelting furnaces. Around the time Hegeler Zinc operations began in 1906, three residential neighborhoods – Hegeler, East Hegeler and Tilton – were developed to the east and north of Hegeler Zinc.

The company shut down its zinc smelting operations in November 1947, but zinc rolling and sulfuric acid production continued until at least 1954. In August 1954, Hegeler dissolved and its sole stockholder, National Distillers and Chemical Corp., took over operations.

National Distillers sold the zinc rolling mill operations the following year to Peterson Filling and Packaging. The facility was then used to package insecticides, shaving products and other items. In 1956, Illinois Fireworks Co. purchased the remaining National Distillers property and made fireworks there until 1987, storing fireworks in temporary small wooden huts and truck trailers placed throughout the site. Many of these buildings and trailers are still at the site.

National Distillers later became Quantum Chemical Corp., which then became Millennium Petrochemicals in 1997.

In May 2003, U.S. EPA installed a six-foot chain link fence around the former zinc smelting area and posted signage to keep people from coming into contact with the contaminated soil and waste material. The site was placed on the National Priorities List in April 2005, making it eligible for cleanup under EPA's Superfund program.

The Hegeler Zinc site has three OUs:

- OU1 is the former Hegeler Zinc property. It encompasses the original boundaries of the former zinc operating facility, including areas of soil, surface water, sediment and groundwater contamination.
- OU2 is the affected areas of surface water and sediment located outside of the U.S. EPA-constructed fence around OU1, including Grape Creek and an unnamed tributary.

- OU3 is the residential area east of the former Hegeler Zinc facility.

### All about lead

Lead is highly toxic. It can cause behavioral problems and learning disabilities, as well as seizures and death. Lead can enter the body by inhaling air, drinking water, or swallowing food or dirt that contains lead. Small amounts of lead can also enter the body through the skin.

Lead can cause high blood pressure, digestive problems, nerve disorders, memory and concentration problems, and muscle and joint pain. Exposure to lead is particularly dangerous for pregnant women. It can cause premature birth, low birth weight or miscarriage. Children 6 and younger are also at risk. They are more likely to swallow dirt that contains lead, and they are more sensitive to the effects of lead. Lead exposure in children has been shown to decrease IQ scores, and cause slow growth and hearing problems.

To learn more about lead, visit [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tf.asp?id=93&tid=22](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tf.asp?id=93&tid=22).

### All about arsenic

Arsenic is highly toxic. It can cause skin problems, decreased production of red and white blood cells, abnormal heart rhythm, and death. Arsenic can enter the body by inhaling air, drinking water, or swallowing food or dirt that contains arsenic. Small amounts of arsenic can also enter the body through the skin.

Arsenic can cause sore throats and lung irritation, and can increase risk of skin cancer and cancer in the liver, bladder and lungs. Arsenic can be particularly dangerous for pregnant women and children. There is some evidence that exposure to arsenic in the womb and early childhood may increase death in young adults.

To learn more about arsenic, visit [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/FS.asp?id=1202&tid=3](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/FS.asp?id=1202&tid=3).

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*This fact sheet is printed on paper made of recycled fibers.*

## HEGELER ZINC SUPERFUND SITE: EPA To Begin Cleanup of Hegeler Residential Area

FIRST CLASS

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

United States  
Environmental Protection  
Agency  
Region 5  
Superfund Division (SI-7J)  
77 W. Jackson Blvd.  
Chicago, IL 60604-3590

