

NPL Partial Site Deletion Narrative

Omaha Lead
Omaha, Nebraska

On August 28, 2018, the EPA deleted 101 residential parcels of the Omaha Lead Superfund (OLS) site located in the eastern portion of the greater metropolitan area in Omaha, Nebraska. The remaining parcels will remain on the NPL and are not being considered for deletion as part of this action. The table of 101 Properties Proposed for the Third Partial Deletion of Properties from the Omaha Lead Superfund site 2018 (EPA-HQ-SFUND-2003-0010-1900) identifies specific properties included in this partial deletion. The location of the 101 properties are shown on Figure 1 "2018 Partial Deletion Omaha Lead Site" (EPA-HQ-SFUND-2003-0010-1895).

The site includes surface soils that have been contaminated as a result of air emissions deposition from historic lead smelting and refining operations. The site extends from the Douglas-Sarpy County line on the south, north to Read Street and from the Missouri River on the east to 56th Street on the west and is centered around downtown Omaha, Nebraska, where two former lead-processing facilities operated. American Smelting and Refining Company, Inc. (ASARCO) operated a lead refinery at 500 Douglas Street in Omaha, Nebraska, for over 120 years. Aaron Ferer & Sons Company (Aaron Ferer), and later Gould Electronics, Inc., (Gould), operated a lead battery recycling plant located at 555 Farnam Street.

Both ASARCO and Aaron Ferer/Gould facilities released lead-containing particulates into the atmosphere from their smokestacks. The lead particles were deposited on surrounding residential properties. Douglas County Health Department (DCHD) monitored ambient air quality around the ASARCO facility beginning in 1984. Blood lead screening of children living in zip codes located east of 45th Street have consistently exceeded the 10 microgram per deciliter (µg/dl) health-based threshold more frequently than children living elsewhere in the county. In 1998, the Omaha City Council requested assistance from the EPA to address the high frequency of children found with elevated blood lead levels by the DCHD. At that time, the EPA began investigating the lead contamination in the Omaha area under the authority of CERCLA. The EPA initiated a removal action in 1999 to address lead-contaminated soils that exceed criteria for a time-critical removal action. The removal response consisted of excavation and replacement of lead-contaminated soil where action levels identified in the Action Memorandum are exceeded. A second removal action was initiated in August 2002 which addressed all other residential type properties where the maximum non-foundation soil lead concentration exceeded an action level of 2,500 mg/kg and explicitly identified the possibility of lead-based paint as a potential contributor to lead contamination of soils within 30 inches of the foundation of a painted structure. In November 2003, the EPA amended the second removal action to lower the action level to 1,200 mg/kg. The two removal actions were combined in 2004 and the action level was reduced to 800 mg/kg in March 2005.

The EPA completed the final Record of Decision (ROD) for the site in May 2009. The selected remedy includes excavation and replacement of soils exceeding 400 mg/kg lead; stabilization of deteriorating exterior lead-based paint; response to lead-contaminated interior dust; health education; and operation of a local lead hazard registry as an institutional control. Cleanup activities at the 101 residential parcels included in this partial deletion action are complete and protective of human health.

The EPA, with the concurrence of the state of Nebraska, has determined that the implemented remedy at the 101 residential parcels have achieved the degree of cleanup specified in the ROD for all pathways of exposure. Therefore, the EPA is deleting these 101 parcels from the NPL.