

# PRICE BATTERY

## Hamburg, Pennsylvania

*Berks County*  
*17th Congressional District*

### **Site Location/Size:**

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The Price Battery site is located in the Borough of Hamburg, Pennsylvania, in Berks County. The site consists of the former smelter and lead battery processing and manufacturing facility and, additionally, surrounding residential properties.

### **Site History:**

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Operating from the 1940s until 1971, Price Battery recycled lead-acid batteries and produced approximately 15,000 batteries per year. It also operated a smelter that released lead to air. The smelter operation was closed in 1971, following citizen complaints that date back as far as 1941 of noxious odors and acid fumes being emitted from Price Battery. The citizens' legal counsel indicated that smoke stacks on Price Battery emitted lead-contaminated ash produced from melting used batteries. Additionally, Price Battery used lead-contaminated battery waste and slag as fill material throughout the Borough of Hamburg. Battery casings also were made available to people to pick up for use as fill.

### **Site Contamination/Contaminants:**

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The contaminant of concern associated with the past site operations is lead. Soil samples obtained from the residential properties meet the definition of hazardous waste for toxicity characteristic for lead.

### **Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:**

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Approximately 222 residential properties have been documented to have lead-contaminated soil at significant levels above the background concentrations. Children have been observed playing in this area where significant levels of lead contamination has been detected in soils. The pattern of lead concentrations detected in the soil samples indicates that the lead concentrations are highest near Price Battery. Additionally, the area of contamination is located in the downwind direction from the Price Battery facility.

### **Response Activities (to date):**

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In response to the above findings, EPA conducted additional soil sampling of residential properties and removed the top one foot of lead-contaminated soil from some of the affected residential properties. Removal activities to address contamination at additional residential properties are ongoing. The removal activities have helped to minimize the threat of exposure to lead in the soil at residential properties; however, it does not adequately address all of the environmental concerns.

*[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See 56 FR 5600, February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]*

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.