



# EPA to begin testing for lead contamination in yards

**USS Lead**

East Chicago, Indiana

March 2006

## Informational meetings

EPA will hold two informational meetings to explain the residential testing process and answer your questions. Please plan to attend.

### Wednesday March 22

3:00 –6:00 p.m.

Washington Elementary School

1401 E. 144th Street

East Chicago, Ind.

- and -

### Thursday March 23

3:00 –6:00 p.m.

Carrie Gosch School

445 W. 148th Street

East Chicago, Ind.

If you need special accommodations to attend this meeting, contact Joe Munoz at least one week before the meeting at (312) 886-7935

## Your help is needed

This fact sheet also includes an access agreement and a stamped envelope for you to sign and send it back so EPA can test your yard for lead contamination at no cost to you.

EPA will also accept signed access agreement at the informational meetings.

It is important to return the access agreement as soon as you get it. The access agreement allows your yard to be sampled for lead contamination.

Soil at some East Chicago homes could be contaminated with lead. U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) plans to find out more information this spring by taking test samples from residential yards in neighborhoods near the former USS Lead plant.

Samples will be taken from yards in an area between East Chicago Avenue and 151<sup>st</sup> Street, and between Aster Street and Parrish Avenue. EPA will hold two meetings to explain this process to area residents (see box, left).

## Permission needed for samples

If you live in the area described, EPA needs your permission to take soil samples from your yard. An agreement form is included with this fact sheet for your convenience. Please complete the form, sign it and return it to EPA in the stamped envelope provided. EPA representatives will also be going door-to-door seeking permission from property owners.

EPA technicians will take samples from both the front and back yards to find out if there is any danger to you from lead in the soil. These tests are done at no cost to you, and all the work is done outside your home.

## USS Lead background

If there is lead contamination in your neighborhood, it may have come from U.S. Smelter and Lead Refinery Inc., commonly known as USS Lead, or other industries that have operated in the area. The company operated on a 79-acre site at 5300 Kennedy Ave. from 1906 until December 1985. They recovered lead from scrap metal and automobile batteries.

USS Lead produced lead waste as part of their smelting process. Some of this waste was emitted into the air, while some built up in large piles on the ground of the facility. The former plant area has already been cleaned up. Now EPA is trying to determine other areas that may need to be cleaned up.

## What is lead?

Lead is a naturally occurring heavy metal. It is commonly found at low levels in soil. Low levels of lead can be found in the air, water, food and dust in cities because of the widespread use of lead in man-made products. The federal government regulates the amount of lead in the air, water and soil.

Lead is highly toxic and can cause a range of health effects, from behavioral problems and learning disabilities to seizures and death. Children 6 years old and younger are most at-risk because their bodies are growing quickly and the effects of the lead can cause problems. Children often have higher levels of exposure because they play in dirt and may put dirty hands in their mouths. Also, children who lack proper nutrition may absorb more lead and suffer more harmful effects.

## What should I do to reduce exposure to lead?

You should take steps to protect children from lead-contaminated soil. Pregnant women should seek prenatal care to protect their developing infants. You can limit children's exposure to dirt in the following ways:

- cover areas of exposed dirt with grass, flowers, mulch or concrete.
- wash down very dusty areas with a hose.
- discourage children from playing in the dirt, gravel or ground covers (like sidewalks and driveways).
- supervise young children to prevent them from eating dirt.
- wash children's hands often, especially before they eat and before nap time and bed time.
- clean or remove your shoes before entering your home to avoid tracking in lead from soil.
- make sure children eat nutritious, low-fat meals high in iron and calcium, such as spinach and dairy products. Children with good diets absorb less lead.

To prevent ingestion of lead-contaminated dust, you should:

- place a door mat at the door.
- vacuum carpets and drapes.
- dust with an oiled cloth.
- mop floors often.
- wipe your feet before entering your home.
- keep windows closed as much as possible to reduce dirt in the home.
- replace furnace filters often.

Call the National Lead Information Center (800) 424-LEAD (5323) to learn more about how to protect children from lead poisoning and for other information on lead hazards, or visit [www.epa.gov/lead](http://www.epa.gov/lead)

EPA representatives are available to discuss the residential yard sampling with you:

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*Technicians taking soil samples for lead*



**Want  
to learn more?**  
These



# USS LEAD RESIDENTIAL SUPERFUND SITE



# Important Community Meeting Scheduled for March 22 and 23, 2006

Details on page 1



Region 5  
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Chicago, IL 60604

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**USS Lead: EPA to begin testing for lead contamination in yards**



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**  
**REGION 5**  
**77 WEST JACKSON BOULEVARD**  
**CHICAGO, IL 60604-3590**

**CONSENT FOR ACCESS TO PROPERTY  
FOR SAMPLING AND TO TAKE RESPONSE ACTION**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Daytime Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Print) \_\_\_\_\_ Evening Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Owner

Address(es) of Property(ies): \_\_\_\_\_

I consent to officers, employees, contractors, and authorized representatives of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) entering and having continued access to the property described above (the Property) to perform the following response actions: (1) collecting soil samples; (2) excavating Property soils; (3) backfilling the excavated area(s) of the Property with clean soil and/or backfill; and (4) restoring to their pre-excitation condition grass, other vegetation, or structures altered during sampling or excavation activities.

I realize that these actions taken by EPA are undertaken pursuant to its response and enforcement responsibilities under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, as amended, 42 U.S.C. Section 9601 et seq. These activities are necessary to identify and cleanup contaminated soils.

I give this written permission voluntarily, on behalf of myself and all other co-owners of the Property, with knowledge of my right to refuse and without threats or promises of any kind. I understand that EPA or authorized representatives of EPA will contact me before the removal of soil begins to discuss the steps involved in the excavation and removal program, and to review all measures EPA will take to restore my Property.

This document can only be signed by the property owner.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

I grant access to my property for sampling and removal

I grant access to my property for sampling only

I do not grant access to my property

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

The following optional information will help us interpret the sampling results:

there are children under the age of seven years living at this residence

there are pregnant women living at this residence