

EPA Plans Yard Cleanups For Excessive Manganese

S.H. Bell Co.

Chicago, Illinois

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For more information

For questions, comments or more information, please contact:

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For more information (including air
monitoring data):

epa.gov/il/sh-bell-chicago-facility

Medical information

For medical information on
environmental conditions contact:

**Great Lakes Center for
Children's Environmental Health
Chicago Office**

312-864-5526

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency is planning to clean up residential yards containing excessive manganese in Chicago's southeast side near the S.H. Bell facility. The city of Chicago asked the federal Agency last April to evaluate soil pollution near the facility in the area between the Calumet River to the west, South Ewing Avenue to the east, 100th Street to the north and 104th Street to the south.¹ U.S. EPA sampled more than 100 yards for heavy metals including manganese and lead.

Sample results showed surface soil (the top 6 inches) in several yards contained manganese and lead above U.S. EPA's action level. The federal Agency uses a standard called "**Removal Management Level**," or RML, to evaluate the pollution. The Agency set a RML of 5,500 mg/kg for manganese and 400 mg/kg for lead.

RMLs help identify areas, contaminants, and conditions where a cleanup action may be appropriate. Sites with pollutant concentrations above the RMLs may not necessarily warrant a cleanup depending upon factors such as background concentrations, the use of site-specific exposure scenarios, or other program considerations. U.S. EPA mailed all property owners their validated soil sample results as they became available and called owners who have high levels of manganese and/or lead in their soil to explain the results.

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U.S. EPA began sampling dozens of yards near the S.H. Bell facility on Chicago's southeast side last spring looking for excessive levels of heavy metals including manganese and lead.

¹ The Aug. 7, 2017, U.S. EPA Notice of Violation to S.H. Bell was issued under Section 113(a)(1) of the Clean Air Act, 42 U.S.C. § 7413(a)(1). U.S. EPA found that S.H. Bell Co. was violating the Illinois State Implementation Plan at its Chicago facility.

Manganese cleanup planned

U.S. EPA is preparing to clean up several residential yards that have manganese concentrations in surface soil above the RML. The cleanup work will begin this spring. The federal Agency continues to evaluate the lead sampling data and has not decided on who is responsible or what cleanup activities may need to occur for that pollutant. U.S. EPA will continue to work with the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to review all the 2018 soil sampling data and evaluate possible cleanup levels and cleanup actions as necessary. Visit EPA's website for more information (*see left-hand box, front*).

Manganese is a naturally occurring element found in many soils, rocks and foods and is used in the production of steel and other industrial processes. Manganese can be toxic when inhaled by humans at elevated exposure levels, leading to nerve damage and behavior and emotional issues.


Safety tips

Here are some steps you can take to protect you and your family from metals like manganese and lead detected in the soil:

- Cover any bare dirt with wood chips.
- Wash children's hands after they have been playing outside.
- Remove shoes before walking into the home.
- Wear gloves when working in the yard.
- Damp mop floors and damp dust counters and furniture regularly.
- Wash children's toys and babies' pacifiers regularly.
- Use a raised bed garden or pots and bring soil in from a reputable source if you're growing edible vegetables.

More information:

<https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead>

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S.H. BELL CO.: U.S. EPA Plans Manganese Yard Cleanups

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