

NPL Site Narrative for Omaha Lead

OMAHA LEAD Omaha, Nebraska

Conditions at Proposal (February 26, 2002): The Omaha Lead site includes surface soils present at residential properties, child care facilities, schools, and other residential-type properties in the city of Omaha, Douglas County, Nebraska that have been contaminated as a result of air emissions from lead smelting operations. The total area of the Omaha Lead site is approximately 8,840 acres. The site is being proposed to the NPL because of the presence of lead contamination in soil at residential properties, child care facilities, schools, and other residential-type properties.

The Asarco facility conducted lead refining operations from the early 1870s until 1996. The Asarco facility is located on approximately 23 acres on the west bank of the Missouri River in downtown Omaha. During the operational period, lead and other heavy metals were emitted into the atmosphere through smoke stacks. The pollutants were transported downwind in various directions and deposited on the ground surface due to the combined process of turbulent diffusion and gravitational settling. In addition, Gould, Inc., operated as a lead battery recycling plant and was considered a secondary lead smelter in the area. The Gould, Inc., plant closed in 1982. Several other businesses in the Omaha area utilized lead in their manufacturing process. Subsequently in 1998, the Omaha City Council solicited assistance from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in addressing problems with lead contamination in the Omaha area. The EPA initiated the process to investigate the lead contamination in the area under the authority of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act.

An ongoing removal action included excavation of lead-contaminated soils from a number of properties. The criteria for removal included child care facilities and residences where blood lead concentrations in children were equal to or greater than 10 micrograms per deciliter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{dl}$) and where soil samples (collected outside the roof drip line) contained lead concentrations equal to or greater than 400 milligrams per kilogram (mg/kg). Currently, removals have occurred at over 290 properties. No further remedial action at these 290 properties is anticipated based on information currently available.

EPA prepared a Preliminary Assessment/Site Inspection Report in 2001. This report summarized numerous investigations that have been conducted at the Omaha Lead site. Results of these investigations indicate that lead contamination is present at elevated concentrations up to 2.5 miles from the former Asarco facility.

Approximately 65,615 residents are located within the identified area of soil contamination. There are twenty Omaha Public Schools within this area including fifteen elementary schools, one middle school, two high schools, and two special study centers. The total enrollment at the twenty schools is 11,725 students. There are approximately 240 child care facilities within a 3-mile radius of the center of the site. The total number of children attending these facilities is unknown. Several parks and golf courses are present within the identified area of soil contamination. These parks are accessible to the public and provide recreational opportunities to the public. In addition, approximately 135 acres of wetlands are located within the 4-mile radius of the site.

Status (April 2003): To date, removals have occurred at over 290 properties. These properties do not include the residents, schools, and daycare facilities described above.

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.