



## *Iron King Mine / Humboldt Smelter Superfund Site*

### Recent Questions and Answers: EPA's Upcoming Sampling and Cleanup of Residential Properties

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March 2024

#### **EPA sampled and did cleanup at residential properties before.**

##### **What is this new work?**

EPA's previous sampling and cleanup work at residential properties cleaned up soil that had the highest levels of site-related contamination. EPA is now sampling and cleaning up properties with levels of contamination that remain above the new lower cleanup levels in EPA's Record of Decision, a final cleanup plan for the Superfund Site. EPA has lowered the cleanup levels we used in earlier cleanups, because new science has become available indicating that lead and arsenic are more toxic than was known in the past. The lower levels will lead to cleanup that is more protective of health.

##### **What contaminants is EPA testing for?**

Similar to previous sampling, EPA will be sampling for arsenic, lead, and other metals at levels that can be associated with the Superfund site.

##### **Why does it benefit me to provide EPA permission to access my residential property for sampling and cleanup?**

Providing access will allow EPA to collect soil samples to determine the current levels of arsenic, lead, and other heavy metals in your soil. This new information, and any sampling results EPA may have obtained in prior years, will be compared to the new cleanup levels to determine whether a cleanup is necessary. If so, performing a cleanup will help to protect the long-term health of those living at your property by addressing your exposure to arsenic or lead above the new, more protective, cleanup levels in soil.

If a cleanup is necessary and no cleanup is done, contamination may remain in the soil on your property. This will be documented in the Superfund Site cleanup completion report.

##### **Will EPA obtain my consent to perform sampling and cleanup work on my property?**

Yes. EPA will respect the decision of individual residential homeowners regarding their property access at this Site, although EPA has certain authorities with regard to property access under the Superfund law.

##### **Will I be charged for sampling and cleanup work?**

No. This work will be paid for by the EPA's Superfund program at no cost to you.

## **Will my property be taken from me if I don't provide access?**

No. Your property will remain yours. EPA's focus is to remove mine and smelter contamination to protect your long-term health.

## **How will EPA reach out to me regarding property access?**

EPA will contact you in the following ways:

- In most cases we will send consent for access packages by US mail.
- We may attempt to contact you via phone or email.
- If we are unable to connect with you, we may come to your door (door knocking) to request consent for access.

If it is necessary, we will conduct door knocking between 9 am and 6 pm on weekdays and weekends. Regardless of how we reach you, we will explain our sampling and cleanup activities and answer questions.

## **After I provide access, will I be notified before workers come to my property to sample?**

Yes. EPA will notify owners and tenants, using information you provide on your access form, or in person, before entering properties to sample. **Please provide us with the best way to reach you so that we can communicate with you.** There will be space on the form to provide us information about pets or other property concerns or dangers and we will do our best to accommodate them.

We will be sampling hundreds of properties in this effort. While we can't guarantee we will reach you in person prior to sampling, we will provide a general time frame when we plan the sampling activities to occur. Our regular working hours will be 8 am to 5 pm on weekdays. EPA is working on ways we can provide regular updates to the community as we move from area to area during the overall sampling effort.

## **Can I stay at my property while EPA does sampling?**

Yes. EPA can conduct soil sampling while you are at home or away.

## **Will EPA provide me with my sampling results? When?**

Yes. EPA will provide homeowners with a data package with sampling results for their property with an explanation of the results.

The sampling process and providing data takes at least two to three months. We are sampling hundreds of properties. Samples need to be analyzed at a certified laboratory. The data is then evaluated for quality control. Once this is completed we must interpret the data and assemble data packages for you.

If a cleanup of your property occurs, EPA will also provide you with post-cleanup sampling results.

## **When will sampling start? How long will it take?**

EPA plans to begin sampling in April 2024. We anticipate completing by Fall of 2024. The schedule will be dependent in part on residents' consent to access their properties for sampling and cleanup activities. Cleanup work cannot begin until necessary sampling has been completed.

At any particular property, the length of time necessary to complete sampling will depend on the size of the property. Smaller properties may require only 10-15 samples, and the work can be completed in about a day. Larger properties (such as an acre or more) may require several days or a week to complete sampling. It is possible in some cases that more sampling may be needed to adequately determine whether cleanup is needed. If so, we will contact you to coordinate additional sampling.

## **What will happen if my yard needs cleanup?**

If a cleanup is needed, EPA will provide you with a property-specific cleanup plan for your review before any cleanup begins. EPA will be available to discuss the sampling results and to discuss the next steps with individual property owners and tenants. After the cleanup is completed, EPA will give you a completion package documenting its work on your property as well as confirmation sampling data.

If a cleanup is not needed, EPA will inform you of your results and that no further work needs to be done. Either way, we recommend holding on to communications with EPA and keeping it with your real estate documents.

## **Will the condition of my property be restored after cleanup?**

Yes. Prior to cleanup, EPA will present each property owner with a property-specific plan for owner approval showing how the yard will be restored to a similar condition prior to cleanup. This will include grading and compaction of soils, replacement of plants and fences, etc. as appropriate.

## **Will EPA keep my soil sampling results private?**

EPA will keep private personal information, including your name and address. The sample results obtained from all properties in our sampling, including yours, will appear in EPA's final report --such as on maps and in databases.

## **Will my yard get re-contaminated when EPA does the larger cleanups at the mine and smelter?**

No. During the cleanup action at the mine and smelter, EPA will employ dust and erosion controls and will not allow dust, wastes, or contaminated soil to leave the area where we are digging and working. Additionally, EPA will deploy air monitoring stations throughout work zones to ensure dust is not leaving the property.

## Where do I go if I have more questions?

EPA will hold periodic community information sessions when major updates need to be shared. We plan to establish a hotline for residents with questions during residential sampling and cleanup work. We also plan to build a website specifically for this phase of the cleanup. This site will provide the Dewey-Humboldt community progress updates, responses to questions, and announcements.

You can also reach out to the Iron King Mine-Humboldt Smelter Site Team

### Environmental Protection Agency

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For more information about the site visit [epa.gov/superfund/ironkingmine](http://epa.gov/superfund/ironkingmine)

## **EPA Open House**

Come join us!

The Mortimer Farms Barn  
1484 Old Black Canyon Hwy

**Wednesday March 20, 2024.**

**12:00 PM – 3:00 PM and 5:00 PM– 8:00 PM.**

We will provide information and answer questions about residential soil sampling and cleanup.