

Healthy Living in the Silver Valley and Coeur d'Alene Basin



EPA 910-K-20-001



September 2020

The Silver Valley and Coeur d'Alene Basin are great places to live, work, and play. Knowing the facts about our area will help keep you and your family healthy. Past mining practices left behind large volumes of lead and other heavy metals in Basin soils. Since the 1980s, we have made great progress in reducing risks from the contamination. For example, over 7,100 properties have been cleaned up. Even so, lead and other metals remain in areas that have not been cleaned up. Read on for tips to limit exposure and safely enjoy this beautiful environment.

Lead in our area

- In our area, lead from past mining practices is often found in:
 - Soil on hillsides and around old mill sites.
 - Soil on the riverbanks and floodplains.
 - Soil tracked into vehicles or into homes from these areas.
 - Soil under clean soil caps, under foundations, and in the dirt floor of crawl spaces and cellars.
 - Dust in homes.
- Lead paint can be present in homes built before 1978.
Learn more at
<https://www.epa.gov/lead/protect-your-family-exposures-lead>
- Some toys and ceramics may contain lead.

Lead Poses a Risk

Lead is most dangerous to young children, pregnant women, and unborn children. It can cause learning disabilities, behavioral problems, and slower growth. Lead can pose a risk to adults, too, causing memory loss, irritability, high blood pressure, and muscle or joint pain. Lead is taken into the body by swallowing lead-contaminated dirt or water, or by inhaling air that is contaminated by lead dust.

- Even small amounts of lead can harm a child -- even less than a quarter teaspoon of contaminated dust or soil.
- Young children crawling and putting hands in their mouths have the most risk.
- There is no safe level of lead exposure.



Keep Clean, Eat Clean, Play Clean!

Reduce lead exposure:

- Know where to play outdoors safely. If you don't know, listed contacts can help. Pay attention to local public health signs.
- Keep hands clean, especially after playing outside and before eating to keep dirt away from mouths.
 - ✓ Teach your children how to wash hands properly.
 - ✓ Use soap and water, but not creek or river water. Bring water with you for cleaning.
 - ✓ Wash for at least 20 seconds to remove lead particles.
 - ✓ Hand sanitizer kills germs but will not remove lead.



Play Safe. Protect Your Health.

The discovery of silver in the 1880s led the "Silver Valley" to become one of the most productive mining areas in the United States. Common historical industry practices and natural processes like flooding caused lead, arsenic, and other heavy metals to be spread throughout the area. Although environmental cleanup continues to protect human health and provide ecological restoration, high levels of lead, arsenic, and other heavy metals remain in sediments and soils along shorelines and floodplains. *Young children and pregnant women are at greatest risk from exposure.* It is easy to reduce exposure and enjoy your time recreating in the Coeur d'Alene Basin by following the safety tips below.

Keep Clean

- Wash your hands and face with clean water or wipes before eating or drinking.
- Wash toys, bottles, and pacifiers if they come in contact with soil, sand, or dust.
- Remove dirt from clothes, toys, pets, cars, boats, and camping equipment before you leave. Wash all items when you return home.



Play Clean

- Play in grassy areas and avoid loose soil, sand, dust, and muddy areas.



Eat Clean

- Drink, cook, and wash with bottled water or water from home. Do not use river water.
- Eat at a table or on a clean blanket, not bare ground.
- Follow fish consumption advisories, especially for pregnant women and children. Find current advisories at: fishadvisory.dhwa.idaho.gov

- Have a table or clean barrier (such as a towel or blanket) between your food and the ground.
- When riding ATVs, motorcycles, and bikes off-road, wear protective gear including a mask or other face covering.
- Dust off or wash off what you can to minimize dirt that you bring home. Until they are clean, store dusty recreational clothes, toys, and equipment away from clean areas.
- Leave shoes outside the camper or tent.
- Wash pets that have played in the dirt or swum in the river before letting them into your home.

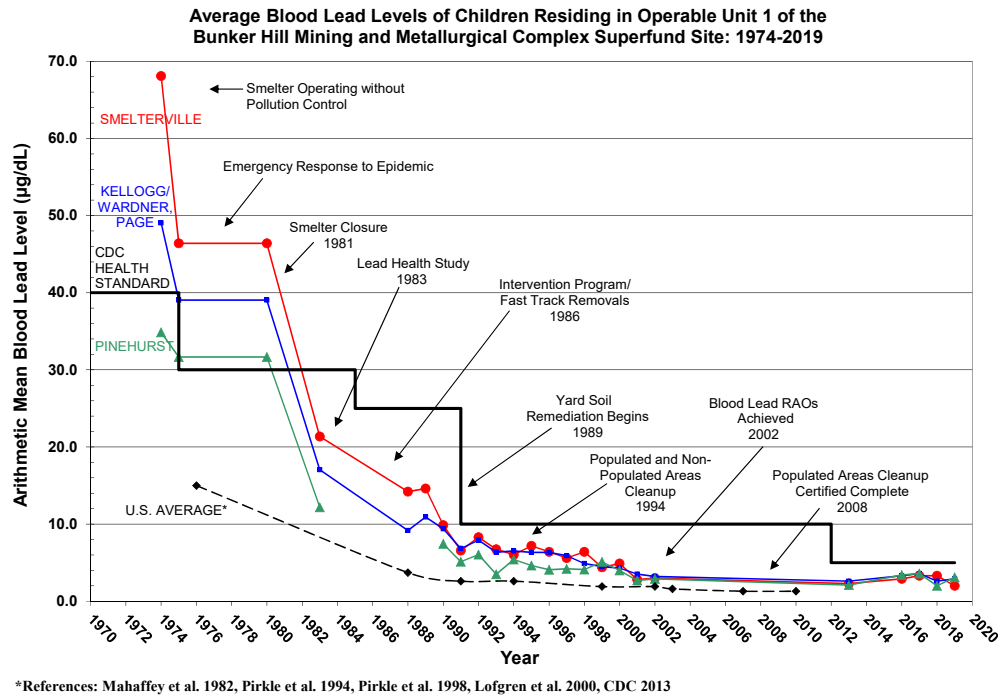


Panhandle Health District
Public Health
Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Contact Panhandle Health District at:
(208) 783-0707
or visit: deq.idaho.gov/playclean

The Cleanup

Since the cleanup began, the area has become a healthier place to live, work, and play. Yards and public spaces are getting cleaned up. Hillsides are lush and green again. The Trail of the Coeur d'Alenes draws visitors season after season. Many roads in the valley are now repaired to protect people's health from underlying contamination. Each year, the cleanup employs scores of local people. The best cleanup news of all is that children's blood lead levels have dropped sharply (see chart).



The cleanup is aimed at reducing risk and removing contamination. It will take a long time. Here is some priority work going on now:

- Continuing property cleanups
- Starting contaminated groundwater collection and treatment
- Addressing recreational and wildlife areas
- Managing the local Institutional Controls Program (see Page 4)
- Finishing up with paving public roads which serve as barriers to contamination
- Cleaning up mine waste at non-operating mine and mill sites
- Providing and operating repositories and waste consolidation areas to safely secure waste soils
- Continuing public outreach and education



What You Can Do...

Have your child's blood lead tested

The only way to know your child's blood lead level is to test it. Screening is available free of cost year-round. Plus, each summer, Panhandle Health District (PHD) offers free testing for young children. PHD also provides free, private consultations on how to reduce exposure to contamination.

PHD: 208-783-0707

Talk to your health care provider

Anyone identified with a high blood lead level should consult with their primary care provider. Also, pregnant women are encouraged to talk to their health care provider early about ways to avoid the risk of lead exposure.



Learn whether your yard has been remediated

Find out if your yard has been cleaned up. PHD: 208-783-0707

Follow the Institutional Controls Program (ICP)

Community members help keep contamination in check by following the ICP. The ICP is a locally enforced set of regulations to control re-contamination. It is operated by PHD. Permits are needed for many types of indoor and outdoor construction activities. Permits and consultations are free. You must comply with the ICP before digging on your property or starting some interior projects. PHD: 208-783-0707

Get more info and borrow a vacuum

The PHD office at 35 Wildcat Way in Kellogg offers helpful information. Topics include local lead exposures, how to reduce risks, how lead affects the body, and information about buying and selling property in the area. PHD also loans special vacuum cleaners to residents. Frequent vacuuming can reduce in-home exposure. PHD Phone: 208-783-0707

Attend Citizens' Coordinating Council meetings

This citizen's forum is the main avenue for public input into Basin Commission activities.

<http://www.basincommission.com/cc>

Stay Informed

Join our mailing list. Contact sherbina.debra@epa.gov • 206-553-0247 or 800-424-4372 , ext. 0247

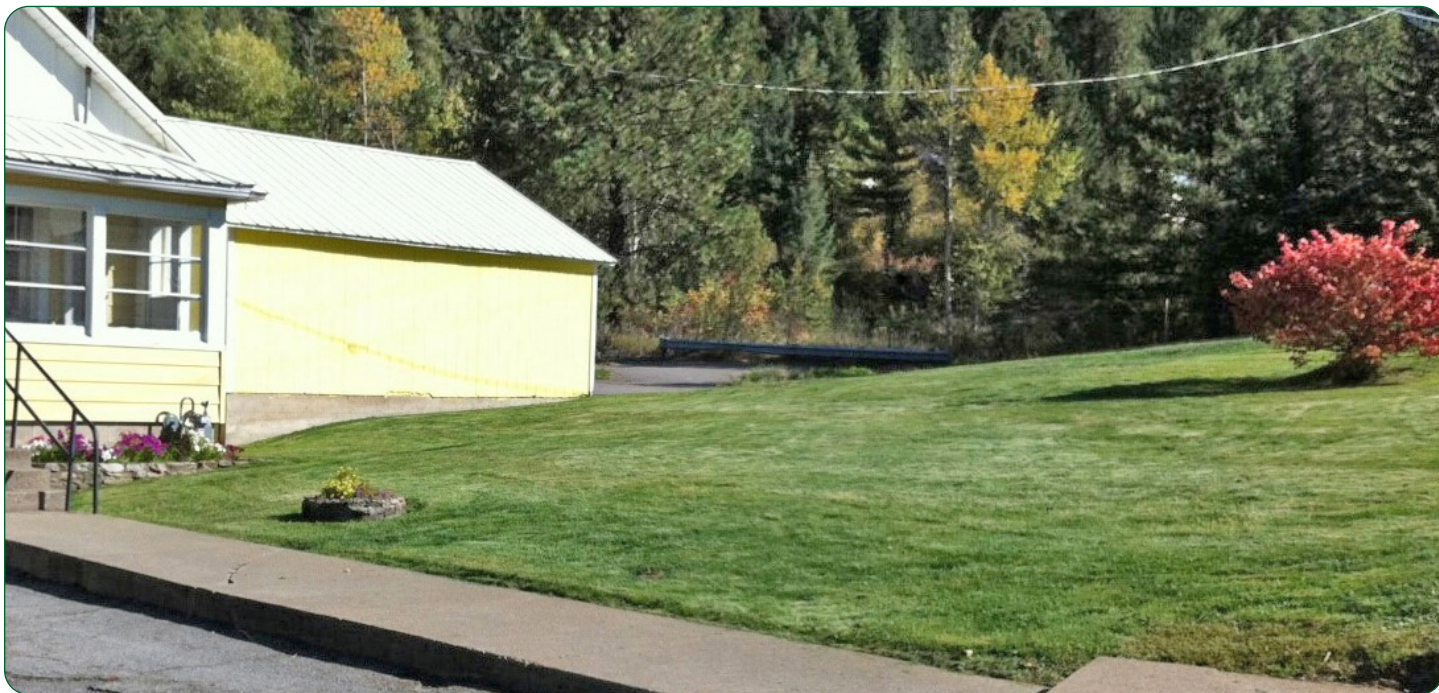
Follow on Facebook: www.facebook.com/cdabasin

Fish consumption advisories are in effect



- Follow advisories when consuming fish from the Coeur d'Alene River or the Chain Lakes.
- Learn more at <http://fishadvisory.dhw.idaho.gov>

Information for real estate transactions



*Yard cleanups reduce residents' exposure to lead and other metals.
Over 7,100 properties have been cleaned up to date.*

The ICP tracks completed cleanups, sampling results, and property improvements. Records are commonly requested prior to land sales and loan refinancing. A request can be made online through the PHD ICP website to check the status of your property, including associated Remediation Plot Plan, ICP Work Permits, and sample data. • <https://panhandlehealthdistrict.org/icp-request-property-info>

PHD: phone 208-783-0707

Lead-contaminated soil is part of federal lead disclosure requirements.

- *Guidelines for Property Owners Affected by Mine Waste Within the Bunker Hill Superfund Site* is available at <https://bit.ly/32ZFK9B> (PDF). This document helps property owners understand possible Superfund liability for mining-related waste.
- To learn about obligations to disclose before the purchase and lease of housing built before 1978 and located within the Bunker Hill Superfund Site, download a brochure at <https://panhandlehealthdistrict.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Lead-Contaminated-Soil-Residential-Real-Estate-Transaction-Disclosure-Requirements-A.pdf>.

The brochure is called *Lead-Contaminated Soil – Residential Real Estate Transaction Disclosure Requirements: Information for Owners, Landlords & Sellers, Buyers, and Renters, Real Estate Agents*. It defines “lead-based paint hazard” and “soil lead hazard.” It also lists the obligations of the seller, landlord, and real estate agent.

- Idaho law requires certain disclosures by seller/owners of residential property and real estate brokers and salespersons regarding the condition of certain real property.
 - Idaho Code Sections 55-2501-2518, the “Idaho Property Disclosure Act,” requires seller/owners of residential real property to disclose the known presence of hazardous materials or substances to prospective buyers.
 - Idaho Code Sections 54-2086 and 2087 of the “Idaho Real Estate License Law” requires real estate brokers and salespersons to disclose all adverse material facts actually known or which reasonably should have been known about the real estate to buyer/seller customers and clients.

For More Information

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Web Resources

Panhandle Health District
<https://panhandlehealthdistrict.org/institutional-controls-program>

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
<https://www.deq.idaho.gov/playclean>

**The Basin Environmental Improvement
Project Commission**
www.basincommission.com

EPA – Coeur d'Alene Basin Cleanup
www.epa.gov/superfund/bunker-hill

EPA – Lead Health Information
www.epa.gov/lead

Cleanup Facebook Page
www.facebook.com/cdabasin

Cleanup Newsletter: Basin Bulletin
<https://go.usa.gov/xGKeG>

If you need materials in an alternative format, contact Debra Sherbina • 800-424-4372, ext. 0247.

☎ TDD or TTY users, please call 800-877-8339 and give the operator Debra's phone number.

