United States Environmental Protection Agency

OLEM/OSRTI
Washington, DC 20460

NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL)

****Proposed NPL Site****

September 2023

FORMER EXIDE TECHNOLOGIES LAURELDALE | **Laureldale, Pennsylvania** *Berks County*

Site Location:

The Former Exide Technologies Laureldale site is in Laureldale, PA. The site lies partially in Muhlenberg Township and partially in the Borough of Laureldale, 0.75 miles north of the city of Reading in Berks County.

Site History:

The site consists of off-facility lead contaminated surface soils and sediment found within an approximate 1-mile radius of the Former Exide Technologies Laureldale facility - a former lead acid battery manufacturing and recycling facility that began operation under the Bowers Battery Company in the mid-1930s. General Battery Corporation purchased the facility in 1958, and in 1987 the company was acquired by the Exide Corporation which operated the facility for lead smelting and lead-acid battery recycling. Lead smelting occurred throughout the facility's operational history until 2013. In 2016, Exide shifted to recycling only the non-hazardous components of the battery and ultimately ceased all operation in May 2020 when the company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy.

Site Contamination/Contaminants:

Historic emissions from lead smelting, primarily in years prior to the installation of emission control systems at the facility, caused the deposition of lead in surface soils in the community surrounding Exide. Lead has also released from the facility via stormwater runoff, contaminating sediment in a surface stream. Other contaminants that may be present at the site include those associated with battery recycling such as arsenic, cadmium, and selenium.

Potential Impacts on Surrounding Community/Environment:

The population most directly threatened by lead and other contaminants that have come to settle in surrounding soils are the 3,423 people who live within one-mile of the site who may encounter lead contaminated soil in their residential yards at concentrations harmful to human health.

Response Activities (to date):

Investigation and abatement of lead that has released to the environment has been on-going since Exide obtained a Corrective Action and Waste Minimization Permit in 1988. Off-facility lead-contaminated soil was remediated by Exide at the surface, however, lead remains in soil at depths of up to two feet below the surface at concentrations that may pose a human health risk. Additionally, several of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Corrective Action cleanup obligations remain unfulfilled. Finally, the EPA Removal program oversees the operation of wastewater and stormwater treatment systems while also decontaminating emission control systems and duct work associated with the former smelting unit.

Need for NPL Listing:

Other federal and state cleanup programs were evaluated for responding to the lead in the off-facility locations but are not viable at this time. Hazardous concentrations of lead at and around the facility were being addressed through RCRA Corrective Action until Exide's corporate dissolution in October 2020. Outstanding cleanup obligations that remain at the facility property will be fulfilled by a prospective purchaser of the facility under the state's voluntary cleanup program. The EPA received a letter of support from the state for placing the off-facility areas where lead will not be addressed by the purchaser on the NPL.

[The description of the site (release) is based on information available at the time the site was evaluated with the HRS. The description may change as additional information is gathered on the sources and extent of contamination. See 56 FR 5600, February 11, 1991, or subsequent FR notices.]

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 https://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp or by telephone at 1-800-CDC-INFO or 1-800-232-4636.