

Opportunity for Public Comment: Proposed Explanation of Significant Differences to Record of Decision for Residential Components of Cherokee County NPL Superfund Site Cherokee County, Kansas – EPA Region 7



OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED ESD



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 7 is seeking public input to update the EPA action level for cleaning up lead contamination in soils at

residential properties across the Cherokee County National Priorities List (NPL) Superfund Site. Historic lead mining activities in the Tri-State Mining District (TSMD) dispersed lead mine waste throughout the area. Lead is a toxic metal that is harmful if inhaled or swallowed and can pose serious health risks, particularly to children under 7 years old, as well as pregnant women and nursing mothers.

As a result, EPA is proposing to lower the residential cleanup level at affected residential properties in an effort to align sitewide cleanup levels with a more stringent threshold of 400 parts per million (ppm) for lead in soil. This is down from the prior 800 ppm action level (and 500 ppm cleanup level) used during past EPA residential yard cleanups in Cherokee County. EPA's prior site decision documents, known as Records of Decision (RODs), explained the cleanup methods (remedies) needed to protect human health and the environment from historical mining wastes at the time they were written. As knowledge and experience with lead exposure grows, it may become necessary for EPA to make adjustments to a ROD. An **Explanation of Significant Differences (ESD)** is the tool required to document such a change.

CURRENT SITE STATUS AND NEXT STEPS



What Does This Mean to Me? If the ESD is finalized, EPA would be able to clean up (remediate) lead contamination at residential properties (and/or other child high-use areas like parks and

playgrounds) with soil lead testing results that meet or exceed the new cleanup level of **400 ppm** for lead in soil. New, or previously ineligible, residential properties would become eligible for EPA's **free** remediation. This action would cover the following project areas (known as Operable Units or OUs):

OU-3 – Baxter Springs Subsite; OU-4 – Treece Subsite; OU-6 – Badger, Lawton, Waco; and OU-7 – Galena Residential Soils. This action also aligns the site remedies with other EPA cleanup actions in the area. The Proposed ESD is an interim (provisional) approach. Additional sampling and analysis are planned to determine a final site-specific cleanup level for residential properties.

HOW TO COMMENT

Public comments on the Proposed Explanation of Significant Differences will be accepted for 30 days from Jan. 28 through Feb. 28, 2023. On Jan. 28, the ESD and supporting documents will be published online for public review at the weblink included below. Site information is available to the public at web repositories. Please visit the Site Profile Page at: www.epa.gov/superfund/cherokeecounty (click on **Site Documents & Data**, then on **Administrative Records**).

- **Send written comments to: Elizabeth Kramer, Community Involvement Coordinator, Office of Public Affairs (ORA/OPA), EPA Region 7, 11201 Renner Blvd., Lenexa, KS 66219; or email: r7-tsmd@epa.gov.** EPA has also established a voicemail box for accepting oral comments at 913-551-8755.
- **Direct questions about the Proposed ESD and requests for site information to: Elizabeth Kramer, phone: 913-551-7186; or Todd Campbell, Remedial Project Manager, phone: 913-551-7115; they can also be reached toll-free at 1-800-223-0425 or by email at r7-tsmd@epa.gov.**
- Documents are available during normal business hours at the **EPA Region 7 Records Center**, 11201 Renner Blvd., Lenexa, KS 66219 (1-800-223-0425); and the **Galena Public Library**, 217 W. 7th Street, Galena, KS (620-783-5132). Copies of the ESD can be mailed upon request.
- For more information about the ESD and prior site fact sheets, see EPA's Kansas Cleanups webpage: www.epa.gov/ks/kansas-cleanups.

Free Lead Testing and Cleanup Opportunity!



If your property has not been tested, and you would like to have your soil and/or private drinking water well tested for potential lead contamination, please **contact us today**

for this free opportunity! Just sign the **EPA Access Agreement (permission form)** if it is included in your sampling access or results letter. Signing and returning the access agreement (via email or mail) allows the EPA contractor to sample and start to clean up the eligible affected areas of your yard.

Contact Us Today!

- ✓ Call EPA's contractor, **Tetra Tech**, at **620-284-1357**, or
- ✓ Call EPA toll-free at **1-800-223-0425**, or email EPA at r7-tsmd@epa.gov.

Annual Childhood Lead Testing



Some children in historic lead mining and smelting areas have elevated levels of lead in their blood. This can cause health problems.

Children under 7 years old living in this area should have annual blood tests. Talk to your pediatrician, general physician, or local health department about testing your child.

You can contact the **Cherokee County Health Department**, 110 East Walnut, Columbus, KS 66725; 620-429-3087. Visit their website at: <https://cherokeecountyks.gov/main/departments/health-department> (testing by appointment).

Or you can contact the **Community Health Center of Southeast Kansas**. For locations, visit their website at: <https://chcsek.org/>.

About Lead and Public Health

Children are more vulnerable to lead poisoning than adults because their nervous systems are still developing. Children can be exposed to lead in their environment and before birth from lead in their mother's body. Children can get lead into their bodies by putting their hands or toys in their mouths after touching lead-contaminated soil and dust. At lower levels of exposure, lead can decrease mental development, especially learning, intelligence, and behavior. Physical growth may also be decreased. A child who swallows large amounts of lead may develop anemia, severe stomachache, muscle weakness, and brain

damage. Exposure to lead during pregnancy can also result in premature births. Some effects of lead poisoning in a child may continue into adulthood.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SITE AND LEAD HAZARDS

Site project information is available to the public at web repositories. Administrative Record (AR) Files and Records of Decisions (RODs) contain technical documents from EPA's response actions. Visit EPA's **Site Profile Page** at: www.epa.gov/superfund/cherokeecounty.

You can also view these documents online during normal business hours at the **EPA Region 7 Records Center**, 11201 Renner Blvd., Lenexa, KS 66219 (1-800-223-0425); or the **Galena Public Library**, 217 W. 7th Street, Galena, KS (620-783-5132). EPA also posts **Fact Sheets** for Kansas sites online at: www.epa.gov/ks/kansas-cleanups.

For more information about lead, visit:

- www.epa.gov/lead
- www.epa.gov/lead/learn-about-lead
- www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead
- <https://wwwn.cdc.gov/TSP/ToxFAQs/ToxFAQsDetails.aspx?faqid=93&toxid=22>
- www.cdc.gov/nceh/lead/docs/lead-levels-in-children-fact-sheet-508.pdf

For more information about how to protect your family from lead hazards, visit: www.epa.gov/mo/protect-your-family-lead-hazards-historic-lead-mining-areas-fact-sheet-august-2022.

SITE CONTACT INFORMATION

Questions, comments, or requests for site information can be directed to EPA (mailing address below):

Elizabeth Kramer, EPA Community Involvement Coordinator; phone: 913-551-7186; toll-free: 1-800-223-0425; email: kramer.elizabeth@epa.gov.

Todd Campbell, EPA Remedial Project Manager; phone: 913-551-7115; email: campbell.todd@epa.gov.

Brian Madeira, EPA Remedial Project Manager; phone: 913-551-7638; email: madeira.brian@epa.gov.

Tetra Tech, EPA's sampling contractor in Galena; phone: 620-284-1357.

For health-related questions, contact: **Cory Kokko, Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry regional representative**; phone: 913-217-5981; email: ckokko@cdc.gov.