



Frequently Asked Questions

1. What are site related contaminants and why did EPA sample soil for these contaminants?

Site related contaminants are a list of substances that are related to the former and current industry in the vicinity of the 35th Avenue Superfund Site. Samples that were collected were analyzed for metals (including arsenic and lead) and polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), including benzo(a)pyrene to evaluate if any further response actions are necessary to protect public health and the environment. Some samples were also analyzed for Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs) when EPA sees a sign that PCB contamination may be present.

2. What is a Removal Management Level (RML)?

RMLs are levels of concern or values used by EPA to help determine if any future actions may be needed. These levels are used to determine if a contaminant could pose a threat by a person coming into direct contact with materials containing the substance. A sample result higher than EPA's level of concern or RML by itself does not mean that an adverse health effects will occur.

3. What does the unit milligram per kilogram (mg/Kg) or parts per million (ppm) mean?

Mg/Kg or ppm is the mass of a chemical or contaminant per unit of weight of soil. To help visualize what this means, one ppm is 1 inch in 16 miles or \$1 out of \$1 million.

4. What does microgram per kilogram (ug/kg) or parts per billion (ppb) mean?

Ug/Kg or ppb is the mass of a chemical or contaminant per unit of weight of soil. To help visualize what this means, one ppb is 1 second in 32 years or \$1 out of \$1 billion.

5. What is meant when sample results are described as non-detect or a "U" shown beside the data reported in a table?

Sample results reported as non-detect or given a "U" value are chemicals that are not detected in a particular sample above a certain limit. This does not mean the concentration is zero, but that the concentration is lower than the measuring instrument can detect.

6. What is meant when there is "J" shown beside the data reported in a table?

The "J" means that the concentration reported is an estimated concentration. The laboratory knows the contaminant is present and very close to the reported concentration, but usually the concentration is so low that the laboratory cannot be positive of the exact concentration. These estimated values are accepted by EPA to use the same as a normal detected concentration.

7. What is a composite sample?

A composite sample is where several individual samples are combined together then analyzed for the site related contaminants. This composite sample represents the larger area from which all of the samples were collected.

8. What is a split sample?

A split sample is created by dividing the soils or other materials that have been collected, preparing them, and providing a non-EPA representative a portion of the sample. Obtaining a split sample would allow someone to obtain a chemical analysis (in addition to the analysis that will be obtained by the EPA) from a separate laboratory.

9. What is a duplicate sample?

A field duplicate is a second sample collected by the same team at the same place, at the same time. It is used to estimate sampling and laboratory analysis precision. Typically, EPA will use the higher result when duplicate samples are taken.

10. Will my property be cleaned up?

If your property had at least one contaminant that is higher than a level that concerns EPA or RML, the next step is for EPA to finish its sampling of other properties within your community and then begin identifying and prioritizing properties for possible cleanup. If no contaminants are higher than a RML, the results will be considered should any further studies be conducted in the community.

11. The letter I received said that the data results on my property do not require any further action. What does that mean?

If none of the samples collected from your property are higher than levels that concern EPA, it was determined that the removal of soils on your property is not necessary at this time. The results will be considered should any further studies be conducted in the community.

12. What about my garden? Is it safe to garden and eat vegetables and fruit from my garden?

If your sample results are higher than EPA's levels of concern (RML) and you choose to continue to garden at this time; we recommend you follow good gardening and food preparation practices. It is recommended that you wash and peel all fruits, vegetables and root crops thoroughly before eating them. For gardens where a RML was exceeded, EPA plans on collecting more data in the near future to make a final site specific determination. If your sample results are not higher than the RML we always recommend use of good gardening and food preparation practices.

13. I have small children. Are there any special precautions I should take for them?

Small children love to play in dirt. As a result of their love for dirt, their smaller size, their behavior (sucking thumbs; putting things in their mouth), and differences in their makeup, children incidentally consume much more dirt than adults. This means soil that may not be harmful to adults or may not lead to contaminant accumulation in garden vegetables, but

may lead to health concerns in small children. If your test results are higher than the RML we encourage you to prevent your children from playing, digging, eating or working in soils. As a precaution, all children's hands should be washed after playing in the dirt and wash their toys that have come into contact with the soil.