



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

News Release

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DTSC Begins Cleanup and Additional Sampling of the Expanded Residential Area Impacted by Exide

SACRAMENTO – The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has begun cleanup activities in an expanded area of residences impacted by lead emissions from the former Exide Technologies battery recycling facility in Vernon. DTSC also began expedited sampling of additional residential yards in the impacted area to quickly assess them for contamination.

"The Department views this cleanup as one of our highest priorities," said DTSC's Director Barbara A. Lee. "We are moving very quickly on parallel tracks to get the Exide site and the residential areas around it cleaned up."

This work follows a meeting Wednesday in the City of Commerce where DTSC presented its plan for sampling and cleanup to a Community Advisory Group focused on addressing Exide's contamination.

DTSC also held a public meeting on Wednesday at which community members provided DTSC with applications to have their property sampled and signed agreements providing DTSC with access to conduct this sampling. Additionally, DTSC announced the opening of an online application form for residents to easily request sampling of their property in the expanded areas north and south of the Exide facility.

Cleanup in two neighborhoods closest to the Exide plant is nearing completion, with 176 properties cleaned to date. The sampling of additional yards in a wider area was analyzed by DTSC and shared with the community in August. This analysis concluded that Exide's lead emissions affected homes in a broader area, roughly 1.7 miles from the facility, which includes between 5,000 and 10,000 residences.

DTSC secured \$7 million in August and quickly developed a comprehensive sampling and cleanup plan for this wider area. DTSC presented the plan to the Advisory Group on Wednesday.

A key component of the plan is the use of X-ray fluorescence devices (XRF) to accelerate testing of the residences. The XRF device quickly analyzes the metals in a soil sample on site, eliminating the need for lab testing. Given the number of homes in the expanded area this device will allow DTSC to more rapidly identify homes for priority cleanups. DTSC will also take soil samples for laboratory analysis to confirm the XRF results.

Another component of this effort is the need for a coordinated, multi-agency approach to ensure that residents are informed about the lead risks, and that those who are most vulnerable – pregnant women and children – are protected from the effects of lead.

Many homes in the area may have lead-based paint that could re-contaminate cleaned properties and continue to pose a health risk to residents. Local government agencies can obtain money from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to remediate the paint, similar to the \$3.5 million Los Angeles County received for this purpose from HUD last year.

“That’s why our partnership with Los Angeles County and cities in the area is so important,” said Lee, “These agencies have the authority and expertise to address the paint, while we clean soils contaminated by Exide. Without this partnership, the yards will become re-contaminated and pose a threat to the health of children and other people who live in the area.”

If the homeowner and local governments are unable to address the lead-based paint immediately, DTSC is exploring other methods of temporarily addressing the threat so the soil cleanup can move forward quickly.

[Link to photographs of DTSC sampling](#)



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FOR GENERAL INQUIRIES: Contact the Department of Toxic Substances Control by phone at (800) 728-6942 or visit www.dtsc.ca.gov. To report illegal handling, discharge, or disposal of hazardous waste, call the Waste Alert Hotline at (800) 698-6942.

The mission of DTSC is to protect California’s people and environment from harmful effects of toxic substances by restoring contaminated resources, enforcing hazardous waste laws, reducing hazardous waste generation, and encouraging the manufacture of chemically safer products.