



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Department of Toxic Substances Control

News Release

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DTSC approves a cleanup plan to remove lead contaminated yards in two residential areas near the Exide Technologies battery recycling facility

SACRAMENTO - The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) approved a work plan today that outlines the cleanup of lead-contaminated yards in two communities near the Exide Technologies battery recycling facility in Vernon.

“This work plan, together with the recently issued enforcement order against Exide, demonstrates our commitment to protecting those impacted by this facility’s past operations,” said DTSC Acting Director Miriam Ingenito.

On November 6, 2014 DTSC issued an enforcement order directing Exide to clean up two neighborhoods - one in Boyle Heights, the other in Maywood - and set aside \$9 million for the work. The company must obtain bankruptcy court approval to comply with the order because it has been in Chapter 11 bankruptcy since June 2013. The two neighborhoods were selected in 2013 because they were identified by the South Coast Air Quality Management District as the areas most likely impacted by airborne emissions from Exide’s operations.

Exide recycles used automobile batteries by removing the plastic casings, and smelting the lead so that it can be reused in new batteries. The plant has been in operation for approximately 90 years. Exide has operated the facility since 2000.

Initial soil sampling took place in late 2013 at 39 residential yards in the two neighborhoods. Some of the samples showed elevated levels of lead, and DTSC ordered Exide to remove soil from two residential yards with the highest levels. Exide was also ordered to contact owners of all 215 residential properties in the two neighborhoods for sampling. DTSC has and continues to oversee all work in the residential areas.

To date, 104 owners have allowed Exide’s contractor onto their property for sampling. Samples from 62 of these homes had been analyzed as of November 7. While preliminary results from these homes have shown elevated levels of lead, the contamination is not at a level that requires an emergency response.

The work plan describes actions that will be taken, including cleaning up and replacing soil where elevated levels of lead were found; dust-control measures; air monitoring; yard restoration; and interior home cleaning. The homes will be cleaned up according to priority, with the highest

priority given to yards with lead levels over 1,000 parts per million, and yards with lead levels between 400 parts per million and 1,000 parts per million where there pregnant women or children younger than seven years are present. Twelve homes are in this category.

Fifty of the remaining homes where samples have been analyzed contain lower levels of lead in the soil, but are over the 80 parts per million set by DTSC as requiring cleanup. These homes will be addressed after the highest priority homes are cleaned up.

Sampling analysis for the remaining 42 homes is not complete.

Beginning the week of November 10, 2014, DTSC staff members will start contacting all residents where sample results are complete. DTSC will discuss the sample results, where the contamination was found, what steps will be taken to remove the contamination, and the schedule for this work.

Soil sampling and cleanup will be at no cost to the property owners. The \$9 million that Exide must set aside for this work will be sufficient to conduct all anticipated work in the two areas.

Once the contaminated soil is removed and taken to an appropriate landfill, the yards will be restored to their original condition.

DTSC has reached out to all residents in the two neighborhoods to encourage them to allow sampling in their yards. Residents who want their yard sampled can call DTSC at 1-844-225-3887 to schedule an appointment.

Review the work plan [here](#).



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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 properties, identifying and promoting safer ingredients in consumer products, and ensuring stewardship through enforcement, regulation and pollution prevention.