

# COMMUNITY UPDATE

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.

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## Exide Technologies Frequently Asked Questions

### Sampling and Results

#### [Q. What are the "Expanded Areas," and why were they sampled?](#)

A. The Expanded Areas are two residential neighborhoods near the Exide Technologies facility in Vernon and together make up the second area tested for possible lead contamination from the Exide plant. They are called "Expanded Areas" because DTSC ordered Exide to expand testing beyond two smaller "Assessment Areas" that already are being cleaned up. The Expanded Areas were sampled to get a better idea of the extent of Exide's contamination.

#### [Q. What are the results of preliminary sampling in the Expanded Areas?](#)

A. Preliminary sampling results did not show any simple patterns that we would have expected to see such as decreasing concentrations of lead the farther we got from the facility or decreasing concentrations the deeper we sampled at a location. This prompted DTSC to analyze the data more deeply and compare it with other metals concentrations.

The preliminary result of this additional analysis shows that the extent of lead contamination from Exide emissions reaches between 1.3 miles to 1.7 miles from the Vernon facility. This area is estimated to have between 5,000 and 10,000 residential properties with the potential for lead contamination. We are doing more sampling and analyzing data to refine the outer extent of contamination.

#### [Q. When will DTSC start additional sampling?](#)

A. DTSC is preparing a work plan, which we will share with the Technical Advisor to review and present to the Exide Advisory Group for feedback. We will identify a contractor who will begin sampling within two weeks after we receive the Advisory Group's recommendations.

More on the Advisory Group can be found here:

<https://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Projects/ExideAdvisory.cfm>

#### [Q. Are any of the results at emergency levels?](#)

A. No. None of the properties sampled so far requires immediate cleanup.

#### [Q. How did DTSC determine no immediate response is necessary?](#)

A. DTSC relied on the same criteria the US Environmental Protection Agency uses to determine the need for immediate cleanup and added more health-protective approaches in assessing lead risks in the expanded area. Some examples:

USEPA guidance recommends taking five samples in each yard. DTSC went far above that recommendation



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and took an average of 60 soil samples from each yard. USEPA guidance recommends the use of composite sampling (where multiple soil samples are combined into one sample and then analyzed). Instead, DTSC used discrete sampling (where each individual sample from a yard is analyzed). DTSC's approach is more rigorously in locating any high levels of lead in a yard, if they exist.

[Q. Were parks in the Expanded Area sampled?](#)

A. Yes, parks were sampled. The results do not show any lead levels that require cleanup.

[Q. Were schools sampled in the Expanded Area?](#)

A. 17 schools have been tested in the Expanded Areas, and the testing results have been shared on our website at: <http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Projects/upload/School-Handout.pdf>

[Q. What are the background levels for lead around the Exide facility?](#)

A. Los Angeles County Public Health officials cite 280 parts per million in the north and 230-250 in the south.

## **Residential Cleanup**

[Q. When will DTSC start cleaning up properties in the Expanded Areas?](#)

A. We anticipate starting cleanup in December 2015/January 2016.

[Q. How long does it take to clean up a property?](#)

A. Each property in the initial Assessment Areas has averaged up to five days to clean up; depending on the size of the yard at each property.

[Q. Where will the cleanup start in the Expanded Areas?](#)

A. We anticipate starting with 38 Expanded Area properties with at least one location with a lead level over 1,000 parts per million in the top 3 inches of the soil. Those properties are among 146 that were randomly sampled as a way to get a sense of the extent of contamination.

[Q. What if, once you start cleaning up the most contaminated properties you find some that are even more contaminated? Will the most contaminated properties be cleaned up first?](#)

A. We will prioritize cleanup based on the most contaminated properties and homes with children. A prioritization plan is being designed now and will be shared with Advisory Group for input.

[Q. Is cleanup of the Expanded Areas subject to the California Environmental Quality Act \(CEQA\)?](#)

A. Yes, DTSC must comply with the CEQA requirements on cleanup of the Expanded Areas. CEQA is a law that requires state and local agencies to identify the significant environmental impacts of their actions, and to avoid or mitigate those impacts, if feasible.

[Q. How long will the CEQA process take?](#)



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A. DTSC will prepare an "Initial Study" to determine the impacts of cleaning up properties in the 1.3-mile to 1.7-mile radius of the Exide facility. The initial study will take about 45 days to prepare and will inform the Department of what documents we need to prepare for CEQA compliance.

[Q. Does DTSC have to wait until CEQA is complete to start sampling or to start cleanup?](#)

A. We will start sampling immediately after we receiving input from our Exide Advisory Group. CEQA approval is required by law before cleanup can start on the properties, but not for investigative sampling.

## Health Concerns

[Q. What can residents do to protect themselves from lead until their property is cleaned up?](#)

A. None of the properties sampled so far requires immediate cleanup. Families can take steps to reduce exposure, including:

- \*Avoid areas of bare soil or cover the areas of bare soil
- \*Remove shoes before going into the home
- \*Wash hands after coming in from outside
- \*Wash fruits and vegetables from the yard before eating them

## Paying for Sampling and Cleanup

A. Cleanup of properties in the initial Assessment Areas has cost about \$49,000 per property on average. The costs drop as efficiencies are found. More information on the Assessment Area cleanup can be found at <https://www.dtsc.ca.gov/HazardousWaste/Projects/UpdateExideSuspension.cfm>

[Q. How much money is available for cleaning and additional sampling?](#)

A. DTSC has secured \$7 million from the Department's Toxic Substances Control Account (TSCA) - \$3 million will be used to clean up of properties with highest contamination based on testing we already have done. The rest of the funds will be used to test additional properties in the Expanded Areas to identify other properties that need to be cleaned up.  
This additional sampling is necessary to determine the location and concentration of lead deposits before we can begin cleaning up the property. Testing also helps us prioritize the cleanup of properties with highest contamination.

[Q. Media accounts claim the complete cleanup will cost more than \\$150 million. Where is that money going to come from?](#)

A. DTSC remains committed to protecting public health and the environment and is working diligently to identify additional sources for necessary funds. The Department will work with other agencies to leverage expertise and resources to recover the costs of the cleanup.

[Q. Initially, DTSC said Exide would have to clean up and pay for all of its contamination. Is that still true?](#)

A. DTSC will hold Exide responsible for the contamination it has caused. We also will document our findings and identify all possible other sources of lead contamination in the communities.



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Q. Exide has said its contamination doesn't reach very far. How can DTSC prove Exide is responsible for the contamination?

A. Preliminary results of our analysis show that Exide's contamination extends at least 1.7 miles from the facility. Public health is our priority. Our immediate plan is to initiate cleanups and recover our costs later from all responsible parties, including Exide.

Q. Are other parties responsible for lead contamination in addition to Exide?

A. DTSC will identify all potential sources of lead contamination and use all legal avenues to recover costs from:

- \* Exide
- \* Other industrial activities in the vicinity
- \* Lead-based paint
- \* Transportation sources



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