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Fact Sheet

February 2005

EPA Issues Interim Record of Decision Omaha Lead Superfund Site, Omaha, Nebraska

INTRODUCTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued an Interim Record of Decision for the Omaha Lead Site on December 15, 2004. This document describes the remedy that will be implemented to address lead-contaminated soils at thousands of additional homes in eastern Omaha. The remedy is considered interim because it addresses only the more highly-contaminated properties at this time. This approach allows additional studies to be performed prior to selection of a final Record of Decision that will address all remaining properties at the Site.

EPA response work has been underway at the Omaha Lead Site since 1999. To date, lead-contaminated soils from 708 residential properties have been excavated and replaced with clean soil. This work has been performed using EPA's emergency response authority which has addressed the most highly-contaminated properties. The cleanup is now moving into EPA's long-term cleanup program.

Excavation and soil replacement has generally been performed until now at properties where soil lead concentrations exceed 1,200 parts per million (ppm). Child-care facilities and properties where children with elevated blood lead levels reside have also been prioritized up to this point. The remedy selected in the Interim Record of Decision significantly expands the scope of the ongoing cleanup.

Under the Interim Record of Decision, the action level for excavating and replacing contaminated soils has been lowered to 800 ppm. As many as 5,600 properties at the Site may be contaminated with lead above this level, and are now eligible for cleanup. The selected remedy includes a number of measures to reduce lead exposure levels in the eastern Omaha community:

- Excavation, backfilling, and resodding of yard soils exceeding 800 ppm;
- Soil replacement and resodding at child care facilities and homes with children exhibiting an elevated blood lead level where soil lead concentration exceeds 400 ppm;
- Participation in a comprehensive program with other organizations and agencies to address other potential sources of lead exposure;
- Stabilization (sealing) of loose and flaking exterior lead based paint prior to excavation;
- High-efficiency interior cleaning of homes following soil replacement; and
- Public health education and outreach to increase awareness and lead-safe practices in the home.

The EPA plans for this work to be performed over the next three to five years. During this period, EPA will collect additional data to better characterize risks associated with the low and moderately-contaminated soils at the Site that are not addressed by this remedy. Additional work will also be performed to evaluate potential soil treatment technologies that could be used to reduce risks in lieu of

excavating and replacing contaminated soils. The additional information generated during the performance of the interim remedy will be used to select a final remedy for remaining properties at the Site.

BACKGROUND

The Omaha Lead Site consists of residential properties that are contaminated with lead due to historic industrial air emissions. The properties that comprise the Site include residential properties, child care facilities, schools, and other residential-type properties in Eastern Omaha. The Site includes only residential properties, and does not include the Omaha central business district.

In 1998, the Omaha City Council solicited assistance from EPA in addressing problems with lead contamination in the Omaha area, due to the number of children that had been identified with elevated blood-lead levels.

According to 2000 Census data, the focus area includes 37,554 housing units, including single family and multi-family dwellings. The 2000 Census population for the focus area is 86,958, including 9,395 children less than seven years of age.

The focus area of the Site includes an area of approximately twenty square miles (12,800 acres) generally bounded by Ames Avenue to the north, L Street to the south, 45th Street to the west, and the Missouri River to the east. These boundaries define a general area where the majority of the impacted properties are located. The actual Site, however, includes any residential-type property that has become lead-contaminated as a result of historic industrial emissions. The Site is defined on a property-to-property basis, and is not defined by a discrete boundary.

Additional information can be found at the following repositories:

W. Dale Clark Main Library
215 South 15th Street
Omaha, Nebraska
(402) 444-4800

South Omaha Library
2202 M. Street
Omaha, Nebraska
(402) 444-4850

Washington Branch Library
2816 Ames Avenue
Omaha, Nebraska
(402) 444-4849

EPA Region 7 Records Center
901 N. 5th Street
Kansas City, Kansas
1 (800) 223-0425

Repository information is available for citizens to review on CD ROM, as well as in hard copy form.

Additional information is available by contacting:

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Toll-free @ 1-800-223-0425

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