

# Residential Soils Bulletin

## PROJECT UPDATE

Volume 1, Issue 1

Ruston/North Tacoma Study Area

December '93

The *Residential Soils Bulletin* is designed to provide information on the Ruston/North Tacoma residential remediation to residents, property owners, businesses and schools. New issues will be distributed as the project progresses and more information becomes available.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has mandated the removal of soil from a number of residential yards surrounding the former Asarco smelter. This includes yards with soils containing more than EPA's action levels of 230 parts per million (ppm) of arsenic or 500 ppm of lead. Under the agency's requirements, workers will remove up to 18 inches of soil. Crushed slag will be removed from driveways and replaced with crushed rock. Slag is a rock-like product formed during the copper smelting process. Large "boulders" of slag will not be removed.

The first step in the process is soil sampling. Results from the sampling will show levels of arsenic and lead in soils, and will determine which yards require soil removal and to what depth. The article on soil sampling in this issue of the *Residential Soils Bulletin* will provide you with more detailed information about the sampling process.

EPA's study of the Ruston/North Tacoma area took approximately four years to complete. The agency considered six options before selecting its final alternative. The original alternatives ranged from doing nothing to removing up to three feet of soil. The alternative selected by EPA has been approved by the Washington State Department of Ecology and meets all state and federal requirements.

### SOIL SAMPLING BEGAN LAST MONTH

Asarco began soil sampling in November to find out which properties within the Ruston/North Tacoma residential study area have soils containing arsenic or lead above EPA's action levels.

Asarco is conducting the sampling as a result of EPA issuing an administrative order to Asarco, a legal document requiring Asarco to carry out the residential remediation. The plan was originally outlined in an EPA document called a record of decision (ROD) which was issued on June 16, 1993.

The soil sampling is the first step in the remediation process and will take approximately three years to complete. It is likely that soil removal and replacement will not begin until spring or summer of 1994.

The Ruston/North Tacoma study area has been divided into four work zones. Within those zones, EPA has identified a primary work area — the area closest to the smelter site. Every property in the primary work area will be sampled.

Hydrometrics, Inc., an environmental engineering and consulting firm, has been hired by Asarco to do the sampling. Hydrometrics will divide each yard into sections. A typical yard will be divided into three to six sections. Within each section, samples will be collected at four different depths. Approximately two pounds of dirt will be removed with each sample. The depth of excavation on individual properties will be determined by sampling results, with 18 inches being the maximum depth.

Each property owner will be asked to give written permission before any samples are taken. All sampling activities will be scheduled with the homeowners. Asarco will work closely with each homeowner to make sure sampling activities are not disruptive. It will not be necessary for a resident to be at home when the sampling takes place. Sampling results will be mailed to residents.



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## SOIL SAMPLING QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

The following questions and answers are designed to help answer your questions about the Ruston/North Tacoma residential soil sampling project.

**Q: How can I find out when my yard will be sampled?**

**A:** Soil sampling began in November and is expected to take about three years to complete. Asarco's contractor, Hydrometrics, has divided the Ruston/North Tacoma study area into four zones for the soil sampling. To find out which zone your property is located in and if it's scheduled to be sampled, call the Asarco Information Center Coordinator, Karen Pickett, at 756-5436.

**Q: If my property was already sampled by EPA, will it need to be sampled again?**

**A:** Yes, more extensive sampling will take place on all properties located in the primary work area to determine if remediation is needed.

**Q: Who will notify me of my sample results?**

**A:** Asarco will notify residents of their soil sample results by mail.

**Q: Do I need to do anything to prepare my yard for sampling?**

**A:** No, residents do not need to do anything to prepare their yards for sampling. However, for the safety of the sampling crew, residents are requested to keep dogs inside or at another location the day of the sampling. Residents will be notified of the date their property is scheduled to be sampled and will be able to change it in case of a conflict. It is not necessary for residents to be home during the sampling process.

**Q: Can you describe the sampling procedure?**

**A:** After the resident has given written permission, a representative from Asarco or Hydrometrics will meet with the resident to explain where samples will be collected from the property. A typical yard will be divided into three to six sections and samples will be taken from each section. Approximately two pounds of dirt will be taken for each sample. Samples will be collected with power tools such as an auger, or hand tools such as shovels and hand trowels. The sampling procedure will not disrupt landscaping. The actual sampling of each property will take approximately a half-day to complete.

### STUDY AREA PHOTO DISPLAY

Residents interested in finding out if their property is slated for sampling can look at a large, aerial-view photo displayed at the Asarco Information Center. The photo shows details including street names, the outline of the study area and work zones.

Asarco's Information Center Coordinator, Karen Pickett, is available to answer questions about the sampling and residential work.

The Asarco Information Center is open 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. on weekdays, and is located at 5311 North Commercial in Ruston. Karen's telephone number at the center is 756-5436.

### Ruston/North Tacoma Residential Study Area Soil Sampling Schedule

Schedule	Activity
Oct. '93	Begin collecting sampling access agreements from resident/property owners
Nov. '93	Sample surface water
Nov. '93	Begin sampling Zone 1
Jan.-June '94	Sample Zones 1 and 2
June-Dec. '94	Sample Zones 2 and 3
Jan.-Nov. '95	Sample Zones 3 and 4
Dec. '95- Nov. '96	Complete samples in Zone 4

