



## Current and Upcoming Activities

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is investigating residential properties in the East Trenton and Top Road neighborhoods in Trenton, New Jersey to determine if lead contamination in soil is from former potteries that manufactured ceramics and other products in the area.

EPA has been evaluating properties in areas where pottery manufacturing took place historically to determine if hazardous substances may have been released into the nearby environment. The investigation is a multi-step process. First, EPA samples soil to determine if there is lead or other metal contamination in the soil. EPA then determines if there is any soil contamination that presents a health risk, and if it is associated with a historic pottery facility.

If the EPA sampling results indicate an unacceptable risk from lead in soil at a residential property that is related to the former pottery facilities, EPA will evaluate mitigation alternatives, discuss them with the property owner, and take the necessary steps to protect the health of the residents.



*Areas where historic potteries operated in and around East Trenton.*



### Help Us Collect Data!

EPA is encouraging all property owners who are contacted by EPA to provide access to their property and to participate in the sampling, which is funded by EPA.

## Past Activities

EPA began an investigation in 2018 into a former solder manufacturer in East Trenton and found elevated lead levels on residential properties near the facility. However, EPA determined that the lead contamination was not caused by the solder manufacturer. EPA began investigating the pottery industry in 2020 as the potential source of the elevated lead levels, which required extensive research and a study to evaluate whether the potteries caused the lead contamination in the soil.

## Site Background

The pottery industry was prominent in Trenton with a major hub in the East Trenton and Top Road neighborhoods. The industry grew from the 1850s until the 1920s when it began to shrink considerably during the Great

Depression. Potteries in Trenton manufactured products, including tableware, Rockingham, art ceramics, sanitary ware, and electrical porcelain. The industry flourished due to its central location between New York and Philadelphia, allowing for easy export of finished goods and import of central New Jersey clays and eastern Pennsylvania coals along the canals and railroads that went through the city. Lead was commonly used in glazes which were subject to very high temperatures in the firing kilns. Lead may have been released in the exhaust from the kiln and gone into the air to then settle into the soil downwind from the kilns. Soil containing ceramic pieces that was likely used as fill material during development of the residential neighborhoods in East Trenton may also be adding to the lead contamination.



**Lead** is a natural metal that can be found in air, water, and soil. When lead is released into the air, it may be transported long distances before it lands and stays on the ground. Lead can affect almost every organ and system in your body, particularly the nervous system. For more information about lead, visit: [www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts13.pdf](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/tfacts13.pdf)

## Simple Steps to Reduce Your Lead Exposure

The following steps are recommended to reduce your potential exposure to lead contamination that may be present in urban soil.

- Remove shoes at the door before entering your home to prevent tracking in any dirt that may be on your shoes. Clean the bottom of your shoes with a wet wipe or paper towel.
- Wash your hands and face after coming in from outside and before eating, drinking, or smoking. Wash children's toys and items they place in their mouths.
- Avoid digging into or disturbing soil if possible, and wash hands and face afterwards.

**For more information about getting your child tested for lead in NJ, visit:**

<http://www.state.nj.us/health/childhoodlead/testing.shtml>

## EPA Contact Information

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The National Lead Information Center provides information about lead, lead hazards, and their prevention. You can call and speak with a specialist Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Eastern time (except federal holidays) at 1 (800) 424-LEAD [5323].

For general information or questions about EPA's Superfund program, please contact [Jim Haklar](mailto:hacklar.james@epa.gov) of EPA's Regional Public Liaison Office, at [hacklar.james@epa.gov](mailto:hacklar.james@epa.gov), or (732) 906-6817 or toll free at (888) 283-7626.