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EPA Works to Address Dioxin Contamination in Benton, La.

DALLAS, TEXAS (February 2, 2024) – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues work to address elevated levels of dioxin found in soil at an apartment complex in Benton, Louisiana. The contamination was found during EPA’s investigation of Benton Creosote Works, a former wood-treating facility across the street from the apartment complex.

EPA expects to begin removing contaminated soil within 30-45 days. It will take six to eight weeks to complete the removal, which will be considered complete once sampling shows hazards have been mitigated. In the meantime, the most important safety recommendation for residents is to avoid contact with contaminated soil, and especially to prevent children from playing in soil. For the safety of residents, EPA installed fencing around the common areas where contamination has been found.

EPA’s safety recommendations include:

- Avoid touching, walking on, or coming into contact with contaminated soil. Children should be monitored closely to prevent them from playing in soil.
- If possible, prevent pets from walking on or digging in soil. Wipe their paws with a wet cloth before coming inside.
- Remove shoes or clothes that have been in contact with soil before coming inside.
- Thoroughly wash hands or other exposed skin as soon as possible after touching soil.

Elevated levels of dioxins can cause cancer, reproductive and developmental problems, damage to the immune system, and can interfere with hormones. Residents concerned about possible exposure should consult their doctor.

Dioxin found in the soil is not a threat to the apartment complex’s tap water, which is supplied from Bossier City, Louisiana.

EPA will keep residents and the city of Benton updated on work at the site.

For more information about dioxin, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/dioxin>.

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