



REMOVAL

Bliss Corner Neighborhood Site Dartmouth, MA

U.S. EPA | HAZARDOUS WASTE PROGRAM AT EPA NEW ENGLAND

THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE AND REMOVAL PROGRAM

responds to chemical, biological and radiological releases and large-scale national emergencies, including homeland security incidents. EPA conducts short term cleanups in the removal program when necessary to protect human health and the environment by either funding response actions directly or overseeing and enforcing actions conducted by potentially responsible parties.



SPRING 2025 SAMPLING EVENT

The EPA continues to support the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) and this spring will be sampling about 30 more properties in the Bliss Corner neighborhood for lead and PCBs. Sampling is expected to take place:

- March 24 - 25
- March 31 – April 4
- April 7 – 11

This sampling effort will help better define the extent of contamination and support the EPA and MassDEP's future site-related decisions, including the planning of possible future removal actions. Sampling consists of using a small drill rig called a Geoprobe (Figure 1) that extracts a 4-foot-long soil core. This core is then characterized using a soil classification system and visual observations and divided into two segments by depth from which soil samples are collected (Figure 2). These samples are then analyzed for lead and PCBs and the results are shared with the resident.

BACKGROUND

In summer 2018, MassDEP and the Town of Dartmouth Board of Health discovered waste material, including buried drums containing unknown materials, at a residential property in Dartmouth, MA. The developer hired a Licensed Site Professional and began conducting response actions to remove the waste material.

During this process, MassDEP learned of potential dumping activities in the Bliss Corner neighborhood dating back to the 1930s, and subsequently began a large-scale sampling initiative. In October 2020, MassDEP asked the EPA for help with additional soil sampling in the Bliss Corner neighborhood. Together, MassDEP and the EPA have sampled the soil of almost 100 properties.

KEY CONTACTS:

AARON SHAHEEN

U.S. EPA Community Involvement
Coordinator

shaheen.aaron@epa.gov

617-918-1071

CAYLA JIMENEZ

U.S. EPA On-Scene Coordinator

jimenez.cayla@epa.gov

617-918-1121

LORI WILLIAMSON

MassDEP

Bureau of Waste Site Cleanup

lori.williamson@mass.gov

617-874-7164

TOLL-FREE CUSTOMER SERVICE

1-888-EPA-7341

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In August 2021, MassDEP asked the EPA to conduct short-term cleanup actions, also called time-critical removal actions, in the neighborhood. The initial document which authorizes short-term cleanups, called an Action Memorandum, was approved in 2021 to remove contaminated soil from five residential properties with elevated levels of lead and/or polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs). The contamination posed a risk to human health and the environment because it exceeded either or both MassDEP and the EPA's cleanup levels (MassDEP's Imminent Hazard level and Residential Standards and EPA's removal management levels).

The initial Action Memorandum was amended four times to conduct cleanups at additional contaminated properties as sampling revealed further contamination. A second Action Memorandum was approved in July 2024 to conduct removal actions at another four residential properties in the neighborhood. The EPA has completed cleanups at sixteen residential properties and one commercial property as of January 2025.

The MassDEP residential cleanup standards for lead and PCBs are set forth in the Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP) (see 310 CMR 40.0975(6)).



Fig. 1: EPA staff using a Geoprobe to collect soil samples.



Fig. 2: 4-foot long soil cores.