

Baldwinville Residential Sites PCB Soil Removal - Some Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will there be any cost to me for this project?

EPA will perform this clean-up using federal funds, and will seek to recover its costs from responsible parties after the action is complete. While owners and operators of a contaminated site can be liable for such clean-up costs, EPA generally exercises its enforcement discretion not to pursue residential property owners who did not cause or contribute to the contamination.

EPA is currently seeking information from the current owners of the Temple Stuart site in its search for responsible parties.

For more information please refer to:

EPA's "Policy Towards Owners of Residential Property at Superfund Sites" (1991)

(<http://www.epa.gov/Compliance/resources/policies/cleanup/superfund/policy-owner-rpt.pdf>); and

"Contiguous Property Owner Guidance" (2004) reference sheet

(<http://www.epa.gov/compliance/resources/policies/cleanup/superfund/contig-prop-faq.pdf>).

Copies of these two documents will also be available in the local project trailer office.

2. What will happen to my yard after the removal is finished? In what condition will it be left?

EPA will restore your property to its existing condition as far as practicable. To ensure this we will document your yard's condition before we begin and come to an agreement with you on where on your yard we will be digging. We will have some flexibility to avoid mature trees or yard fixtures and still meet the cleanup goals. However, in some cases, it may be unavoidable to remove mature trees or shrubbery which cannot be replaced as existing.

We will be spreading a layer of loam several inches thick and seeding with grass, as opposed to the sanding fill and highway mix seed used on the Temple Stuart Site.

3. How long will it take?

Each yard will take a different amount of time depending on the configuration of your yard and the portion we need to dig. Yards may take a few weeks to dig and backfill, followed by a week for restoration. We will attempt to restore your yard immediately after digging is complete, but there may be a small delay.

4. When will you start?

We will start digging in August with the yards near Holman and Harris Streets, since these generally a greater portion of the yard that needs digging. We'll then move on to Bridge, Winchester and Elm streets. The whole project will continue through December, weather permitting. I expect we'll need to finish the project next spring.

We will start some preparatory sampling work to confirm the PCBs are shallow with a piece of equipment called a geoprobe rig on Monday, July 19 on some of the yards nearest to Holman and Harris Streets. The geoprobe rig is a trailer pulled rig that “pushes” rather than drills a boring. We will be going to three feet deep to verify the PCBs are shallow, as they were on the adjacent Temple Stuart Site.

5. What hours will you be working?

We will generally work from 7:00 am to 4:00 - 6:00 pm. We can be flexible for those who work evening or night shifts.

6. How will the digging affect my health and safety?

No special precautions will be required and you’ll be able to safely stay at home while we are working on your yard. We will be monitoring for particulate matter and suppress dust with water if required. You will see the workers wearing white tyvek suits. This is to lower their exposure to the material as they will be actively digging in the work area. No respiratory protection is required for this work. You will see the workers wearing hard hats, safety glasses and work boots as required by OSHA.

The primary impacts on your household will be noise and temporary restriction for active work areas. It would also be best if you would minimize time in unrestricted areas of your yard during the active work period.

7. What are the cleanup levels?

We have developed two cleanup criteria. First, grids will be removed to achieve an average of less than 2.0 ppm PCBs across your entire yard. This corresponds to MADEP’s allowable level for PCBs in residential soil. Second, any grid square greater than 10.0 ppm PCBs will also be excavated. This corresponds to MADEP’s imminent hazard level of 10.0 ppm PCBs. Consideration will be given to remove grid squares from areas where obvious exposure could occur even if that grid square was not originally planned for removal. Conversely, grids planned to be removed that contain high value yard trees/shrubs or fixtures will be considered for “trading” with other grid squares, and averaged to meet the cleanup criteria.

8. How deep will you be digging?

Our experience at Temple Stuart indicates that the contamination is shallow. We are planning on digging to one foot below grade and backfilling with clean soil. Confirmation samples of the excavation floor and walls will be taken to ensure the cleanup criteria have been met.

9. Will you test the back fill material?

Yes, the back fill material will be tested to ensure it is free of PCBs.

Planned Sequence of Work

For each yard:

- Sample to three feet below ground surface in one foot intervals at the center of each grid square we plan to dig. We hope to confirm PCBs are only in shallow soils; we will be using a geoprobe drill.
- Document yard conditions.
- Develop final cleanup plan, mark grids to be dug.
- Dig grid squares to one foot depth.
- Take confirmation samples of excavated grid walls and floor to verify that remaining PCB concentrations meet the cleanup criteria.
- Backfill excavations.
- Restore yards.
- Document the new yard conditions.
- Submit report on cleanup to owners.

For the Project as a whole:

- Sample 5-10 yards already sampled last summer using the geoprobe to confirm PCBs are in shallow soil. Cease geoprobe sampling when shallow PCBs are confirmed and/or adjust project planning per the results.
- Document yards' condition, make final excavation plans; and mark grids on properties.
- Sample an additional 24 yards for PCBs to complete investigation of PCB contamination spread.
- Excavate, backfill and restore yards as discussed above.
- Repeat above process for any additional yards meeting excavation criteria.

