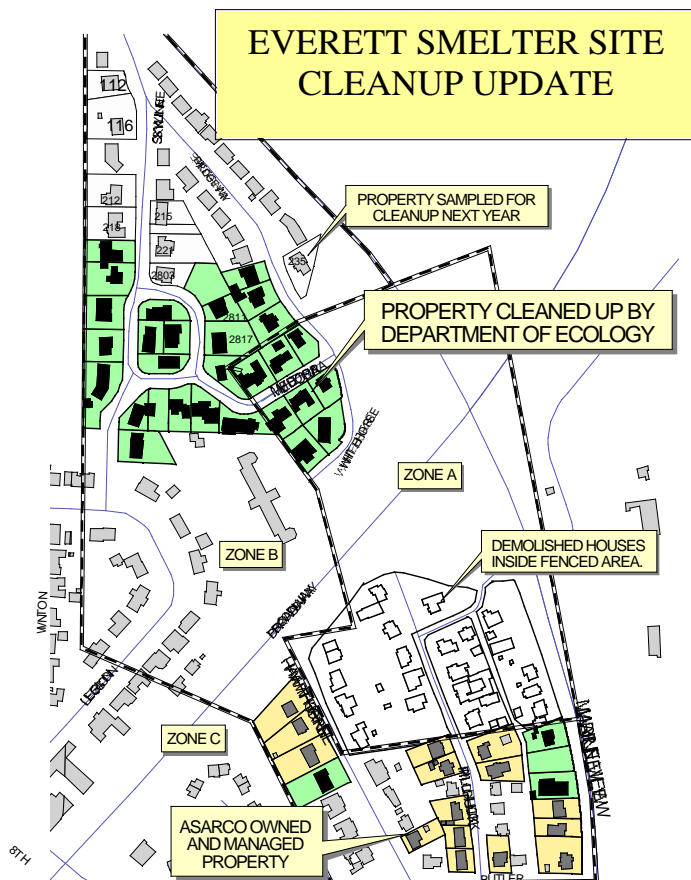


Today a large part of the original smelter property is closed to public access and is surrounded by a fence (see map below). The fenced area is where the highest levels of arsenic were found, over 700,000 mg/kg (ppm). ASARCO, Inc., purchased and then demolished the homes in this area. Several other interim actions to reduce exposure also were taken at homes where high levels of metals were found in the soil. These actions included paving over exposed soil and replacing gardens.



Although a legal battle continues over responsibility for the cleanup, Ecology has cleaned up 30 properties within the Everett Smelter Site since 1999. The properties were cleaned up by an Ecology contractor who removed accessible soil from the yards then replaced it with clean fill and new lawns. The contractor may have removed soil as deep as 48 inches in some places, but no less than 12 inches, depending on the level of contamination at depth.

It is important to know that contaminated soil may still exist on cleaned up property under walkways, around large trees, and at greater depths. This means that current property users will

need to understand the specific "Details of Cleanup Activity" conducted at each property and continue to take some precautions. See "Frequently Asked Questions" on page 5.

## Frequently Asked Questions

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### What requirements did Ecology follow for the cleanup?

The cleanup followed the “The Everett Smelter Site, Integrated Final Cleanup Action Plan and Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Upland Area” (FCAP) dated November 1999, which was written by Ecology to comply with the Model Toxic Control Act. The FCAP requires removal of contaminated soil and/or the placement of clean soil over contaminated soil that cannot be removed. The FCAP requires a certain amount of pre-cleanup testing for each yard, depending how far away the property was from the original smelter. For example, more testing is required per yard and at greater depth in zone A, than in zone B or zone C (see map on page 4).

### What if I want to remove a tree, or remodel my home?

Ecology did not clean up beneath large trees, under driveways, or in crawl spaces beneath the home. If you plan to disturb dirt in areas that have not been cleaned, you should follow the preventive measures listed below. In some cases the homeowner may have requested that certain plants or shrubs not be disturbed. This could mean that contaminated soil was left in place.

### Can I dig in my yard?

If it is necessary for you to disturb the soil within the Community Protection Measures Area, you should follow the Public Health Advisory on page 11 and take the following specific precautions:

- Moisten soil before beginning to dig to prevent dust. Add enough water so that your soil is moist or damp, not drenched. Also, use caution when applying water to prevent water from flowing into storm drains.
- If your yard has been cleaned up, a black cloth marker (geotextile) may have been placed at depth below clean soil, to indicate the presence of soil with arsenic exceeding the cleanup level. Soil above the black cloth marker is clean, and soil below the marker is still contaminated. To access soil below the black cloth marker, carefully cut and pull back the black cloth in the area where you plan to dig. Soil above the liner may be used in other areas on your property if kept separate from contaminated soil. Note that in some areas, the black cloth marker may be absent because Ecology determined that the remaining soil had an arsenic level less than the cleanup level. Refer to the specific details of cleanup activities for each property for further information.
- Isolate or set aside the soils that you remove from the excavation or beneath the marker. As you remove the soil from the hole, keep it contained on a plastic sheet so that it doesn't get mixed with the surface soil or grass.

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What should I do with soil that I have dug up?

If possible, reuse the soil as backfill in the same hole and cover it with the existing geotextile marker and/or clean soil. If you are unable to replace the soil in the excavation, you may be responsible for proper disposal. However, there is free disposal for small volumes of soil through the Residential Soil Disposal Program. Contact the Asarco Information Center at 425.259.0822.

Any soil encountered inside the Community Protection Measures Area, and outside the fenced area of zone A, will probably not designate as a state dangerous waste. All soil from the smelter site should be considered “problem waste” and therefore cannot be used as clean fill. As problem waste, all soil removed from this area must be disposed of as solid waste in a permitted garbage landfill, unless testing demonstrates otherwise. For more information on proper soil disposal, contact Mike Young at the Solid Waste and Toxics Section of the Snohomish Health District at 425.339.5250.

What should people do about lawn care?

Keeping the grass and other vegetation in good condition over contaminated soil is important. While grass will not eliminate exposure, it will reduce it compared to bare soil. If your lawn has bald spots, soil should be damp before mowing. Lawn aeration, fertilization, over seeding and watering will keep grass healthy and help keep soil in place. Grass plugs from aeration should be disposed of as trash; clippings can be recycled unless property owners have been notified otherwise. Newly planted sod put over clean soil as part of the Ecology cleanup needs special maintenance because of the new root system. Follow instructions provided by the sod supplier.

Can I clean up my own property?

To obtain an Ecology agreement and written response for property cleanup, you must follow the FCAP and work through the Voluntary Cleanup Program. Ecology has some written general guidance material and a consultation program available to provide you assistance tailored specifically for your site. Ecology may provide you up to one hour of consultation on general or technical issues without charge. If you request additional assistance, Ecology will bill you an hourly rate for this time. For help, you may contact Joe Hickey at 425.649.7202; e-mail: [jhic461@ecy.wa.gov](mailto:jhic461@ecy.wa.gov).

<http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/vcp/vcpfaq.htm>

What cleanup is planned next by Ecology?

As soon as a final budget from the legislature is approved this year, Ecology will start preparing bids to clean up 9 properties already sampled. This work is anticipated to be done July-October, 2001. Ecology will also begin sampling an additional 20 properties (not yet selected) to be cleaned up in 2002 and 2003.

## Frequently Asked Questions (continued)

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### **What do I need to know about large projects?**

For large projects that might require a building permit, soil samples may be needed before soil disposal options can be considered. A consultant should be employed to help with this. Representative soil samples must be collected and analyzed for total arsenic in accordance with standard environmental laboratory procedures. Results of the analysis must be reported to the City of Everett Public Works Department, the Department of Ecology Toxics Cleanup Program and the Snohomish Health District. A list of certified labs can be obtained from Ecology at 360.871.8860 or check their web page at: [http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/labs/labs\\_main.html](http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/eap/labs/labs_main.html).

### **What is the latest news on the court case?**

The State Supreme Court will hear the case of ASARCO, Inc. v. Ecology on May 31, 2001. This case concerns constitutional issues regarding cleanup requirements. A notice of opinions will be posted on the court's homepage:

<http://www.courts.wa.gov/home.cfm>

### **Are people getting sick at this site?**

There has not been any reported illness directly linked to the contaminants found on the smelter site. Exposure to the contaminants seems to have been very minimal, and illness risk, if any, is likely to be very small. Urine arsenic levels above the normal range have not been found among residents who have taken advantage of free urine arsenic testing (see page 14), although some elevated urine arsenic levels were found among people living in the most contaminated part of the site shortly after the site was discovered. However, many of the illnesses potentially caused by low levels of exposure to arsenic, cadmium and lead may not appear until many years after exposure and may not be distinguishable from illness caused by other factors. For these and other reasons, illness caused by exposure to the site contaminants would be very difficult to identify with certainty.

### **Where can I learn more about preventing cancer?**

Harvard School of Public Health (<http://www.yourcancerrisk.harvard.edu/>)

This site gives cancer risk estimates and provides personalized tips for prevention.

American Lung Association of Washington (<http://www.alaw.org/air/>)

Master Home Environmentalist volunteers use a Home Environmental Assessment List to help you identify health hazards in your home.