



Fact Sheet

Residential Yard Cleanup Near J.H. Baxter Facility Delayed to Conduct Additional Testing

What's happening

Thirty-two yards have been sampled over the past year by JH Baxter's consultant, DEQ's consultant, and the US Environmental Protection Agency. These sampling events identified five homes with yards containing dioxin/furan concentrations above 40 parts per trillion, the level that DEQ and the Oregon Health Authority have prioritized for cleanup as soon as possible, based on potential health impacts to children under 6 years of age. Dioxin/furan concentrations above 40 parts per trillion is the level at which children under 6 years of age may have an increased risk of reproductive effects in adulthood, if exposed to the contaminated soil every day for a year or longer. No children live in the five homes set for soil cleanup.

DEQ planned to perform soil removals at the five homes this year. However, testing that took place in June of this year discovered dioxin contamination in soil in yards deeper than DEQ expected, down to 12 inches in some yards. To be sure that all contamination is removed, additional sampling is necessary, and this will take more time to complete.

DEQ evaluated many options to try to get the cleanups completed this year and discussed these options with the five owners. DEQ concluded that the best approach would be to collect additional data in order to ensure that all contaminated soil can be removed and replaced with clean soil. As a result, DEQ's contractor will be collecting additional soil samples at several intervals, down to about 3 feet. This will unfortunately delay the cleanups, but it will allow DEQ to be confident that all contaminated soil will be removed and replaced with clean soil.

Background

Initial sampling of yards in the eight homes near the site in fall of 2021 detected dioxin/furan contamination. Additional sampling was needed further away from the site to see if more properties were affected.

USEPA collected samples from an additional 22 yards in May, and DEQ's contractor collected samples from two additional yards. The results of this additional sampling show that the contamination extends beyond the original eight yards and that additional sampling is needed.

Next steps

DEQ's contractor will be collecting more samples down to three feet in the five yards needing cleanup. In addition, they will be identifying and testing additional clean soil to replace the contaminated soil. This is an important step to make sure that the soil being put back is clean and safe.

DEQ has requested that EPA collect samples from an additional 30 yards, primarily north and east of the homes that have already been sampled. This will occur by the end of this year. As soon as the soil testing results are available, DEQ will share the results with each owner and resident. The samples take 6-8 weeks to analyze.

What are Dioxins?

Dioxins are a group of chemicals that are formed during industrial processes such as the bleaching process in pulp and paper making. They are also present in some wood treatment formulations and can be generated during the burning of organic materials, including wildfires. Studies have shown that exposure to dioxins increases the risk of several types of cancer. More information about dioxins and related health effects can be found in the ToxFaq (<https://bit.ly/3DExa2E>) for chlorinated dibenzo-p-dioxins (CDDs).



Where can I get more information?

DEQ's J.H. Baxter's web document site at: <https://www.oregon.gov/deq/Programs/Pages/JH-Baxter.aspx>
You can also contact DEQ's Cleanup Project Manager, Susan Turnblom, at 541-687-7464, or email: Susan.Turnblom@deq.oregon.gov

Alternative formats

DEQ can provide documents in an alternate format or in a language other than English upon request. Call DEQ at 800-452-4011 or email deqinfo@deq.oregon.gov