



# EPA Expands Investigation of Buried Battery Casings

## West Deptford, New Jersey

Community Update

June 2016

### EPA TO EXPAND INVESTIGATION AND REMOVE CONTAMINATED MATERIAL:

Soil boring and soil sampling will continue in residential yards located in the neighborhood surrounding Birchly Court. Buried lead contaminated battery casing material and soil in Birchly Court will be excavated and transported to appropriate disposal facilities. This work will take place from June 2016-December 2016. EPA will monitor the air at the site during the excavation and loading activities to ensure the safety of the community and site workers.

### WHY IS LEAD A PROBLEM?

Lead is a toxic metal that can cause a number of harmful health effects, particularly to children under the age of six. Exposure to lead can occur when children play with lead contaminated materials such as battery casings or lead contaminated soil and put their hands or dusty toys in their mouths. Lead can also get into your body by breathing or swallowing lead dust or by eating lead contaminated soil.

EPA is hosting a public availability session on:

**Wednesday July 13, 2016**  
at the  
**Verga Fire House**  
**1415 Crown Point Road**  
from **2:00 PM to 4:00 PM**  
and **6:00 PM to 9:00 PM**

EPA representatives will be on hand to answer any questions you may have regarding the investigation. There will be no formal presentation

### WHY IS EPA INVESTIGATING BIRCHLY COURT?

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is expanding its investigation of lead contamination in and around the Birchly Court neighborhood in West Deptford, New Jersey. EPA contractors will be collecting soil samples from yards in approximately 34 residential properties on Birchly Court, Woodlane Drive and Oakmont Court. In addition, EPA will be removing buried battery casings and contaminated soil from Birchly Court properties where battery casing were discovered and lead contamination was confirmed. EPA is currently investigating the prior owners, operators and developers of the property that makes up the "Tempo" subdivision (now Blocks 132.06 and 132.07) to determine the source of the contamination.

In late 2015, during a routine sewer repair excavation of a residential yard on Birchly Court, buried battery casings were discovered. In March 2016, NJDEP referred the discovery to EPA for further investigation. In May 2016, EPA collected soil samples from the yards of the affected properties and confirmed the existence of lead associated with the battery casings. EPA determined that the levels of lead in certain residential properties were elevated above the health based standards. EPA is addressing this contamination under a Federal Program commonly known as Superfund.



Figure 1: Buried crushed battery casings at Birchly Court

**For more information about the site please contact:**

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or

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Community Involvement Coordinator  
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**If you would like information on other environmental issues or the Superfund hazardous waste program contact:**

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Figure 2: Soil sampling at a residential property

### **WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?**

EPA representatives will be contacting property owners in the neighborhood to obtain access for soil sampling. Sampling will take place throughout the summer of 2016. Should unacceptable levels of lead associated with waste battery casings be found, EPA will contact the property owner regarding future work. All data collected will be shared with the property owners.

### **WHEN WILL EPA REMOVE THE CONTAMINATED MATERIAL?**

EPA will begin the excavation of approximately 1,200 tons of contaminated soil in Birchly Court in the summer of 2016. Excavated areas will be backfilled with clean soil, and will be re-graded and seeded. Air monitors will be placed strategically at the site to ensure the safety of the community and the workers. Work is expected to continue into the fall of 2016.

### **SIMPLE STEPS TO REDUCE YOUR LEAD EXPOSURE**

The following steps are recommended to reduce your potential exposure to lead contamination that may be present in urban soils.

- Remove shoes at the door before entering your home to prevent tracking in any dirt that may be on your shoes. Clean the bottom of your shoes with a wet wipe or paper towel.
- Wash your hands and face after activities in the yard and always before eating, drinking, or smoking.
- Avoid digging into or disturbing soil below the surface of the ground.
- Avoid direct contact with any battery casing material.