

Public health information

Surface soil test results

Information for Verte Homesteader community residents

Surface soil test results

Surface soil sampling to a depth of 30cm (approximately 1 foot) has been completed in the Verte Homesteader neighbourhood.

Nearly 250 samples were collected throughout the community, including residential properties.

Testing results show:

- There are no results indicating health concerns in the surface soil of homeowner properties in the neighbourhood.
- Four specific areas of unoccupied land on the southeast area of the neighbourhood had results that exceeded safe levels for public health protection.
- Additional fencing will be immediately installed by Alberta Environment and Parks as a precaution.

What we found

The surface soil testing found no exceedance of chemicals other than dioxins and furans in four specific unoccupied areas. Exposure to these contaminants in large amounts over long periods of time could lead to an increase in risk to human health.

Risk of exposure

The health risks of chemical exposure depend on several factors, including how much, how long and how often exposure happens.

The main ways in which people could be exposed to dioxins and furans in soil is through touching or eating the soil, or indirectly on clothes or yard equipment. At the levels found in the four areas, casual contact (such as walking across the site) would not be considered enough contact to cause risk.

If, however, contaminated soil was ingested in large amounts or regularly over long periods of time, this can possibly increase the risk of developing birth defects, developmental delays, skin cancer and other forms of cancer.

Action to take

The four areas where unsafe levels were found are being fenced off and this will limit further access by local residents. However, if you have been exposed to the soil in those areas, you should take the following precautions:

- Whenever hands are soiled, they should always be washed thoroughly.
- If your clothes or shoes are heavily soiled with mud or dirt from those areas, brush the soil off outside the home and wash those clothes apart from other household clothing.

If you experience any specific symptoms that you find concerning, consult your family physician or call Health Link at 811

Children

If children have walked or run through the affected areas but did not disturb the soil, then any exposure is likely to be minimal.

If children ingested the soil then the risk of exposure may increase.

Children exposed to these chemicals are likely to experience the same health effects as adults.

Pets

Exposure is likely to be minimal if pets are only walking or running through the affected areas but not disturbing the soil. If an animal ingested the soil, then the risk of exposure may increase.

Impact to water use and other activities

Edmonton's water supply comes from the North Saskatchewan River and not from groundwater wells. The risk of chemicals entering a home through water lines is very low.

There are no concerns with residents gardening and eating vegetables from their backyards or from any other activities occurring on residents' properties or on community spaces, including the park and nearby school grounds.

Next steps

The surface soil testing will contribute to the larger assessment currently underway in the area surrounding the site of the former Domtar wood treatment facility.

This process involves deeper sub-surface testing along with a human health risk assessment. **Those results are expected in fall.**

For more information

More information is available at alberta.ca/domtar

You can also contact the Environment and Parks information centre:

- Call toll-free at 310-3773 or 1-877-944-0313
- Email AEP.Info-Centre@gov.ab.ca