

# EPA Shares Step-by-Step Soil Sampling Process – Residents May See Crews This Week

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio – Due to snow cover, today’s soil sampling efforts were delayed. Tomorrow, EPA and Norfolk Southern plan to resume sampling at agricultural, residential, commercial, and recreational properties in both Ohio and Pennsylvania. EPA has highlighted what community members can expect to see during the sampling process on our Facebook and Twitter accounts. You can view and share this resource from [EPA Region 5 Great Lakes Facebook](#) and [Twitter page](#). You can view and share this resource from [EPA Region 5 Great Lakes Facebook](#) and [Twitter page](#).

This soil sampling effort will help identify if contaminants, including SVOCs and dioxins, are present and may have been caused by the train derailment. EPA and Norfolk Southern contractors have collected 80 soil samples to date.

1. Crews in neon vests in the East Palestine, Ohio, community looking for ash or soot from the burn that may have been carried by the wind from the derailment site.



2. If crews find ash or soot, they will sample the soils on the surface and collect a shallow subsoil sample. Using a clean hand trowel, the subsoil samples are collected from 1 to 6 inches into the ground.

3. The soils are then placed in a half-gallon bag in order to screen the soils for vapors prior to being sent to the lab.



4. Soil from the bags is then placed into small glass jars that will be sent to an EPA-approved lab to test for semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs) and dioxins. EPA periodically splits the soil samples for testing at a separate laboratory.

## Operational Updates

### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- EPA will hold a Community Resource Open House on March 16 from 6-8 p.m. at the East Palestine school gym (360 West Grant Street). This will be an opportunity for residents to talk face-to-face and ask questions to representatives of responding agencies. Residents will also have the opportunity to learn more about the scientific equipment that EPA uses to monitor the quality of the air.
- At the same time, Beaver County, along with the Pennsylvania Departments of Agriculture, Environmental Protection, and Health and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) of the CDC, the Environmental Protection Agency, Norfolk Southern, and State Representative Jim Marshall will host a Community Resource Open House for Pennsylvania residents. That open house will take place at Darlington Township Volunteer Fire Department (3590 Darlington Road, Darlington, Penn.).
- Contaminated waste from the Norfolk Southern train derailment in East Palestine is being shipped to appropriate disposal facilities. Contaminated soil is currently being moved offsite and contaminated liquid continues to move quickly. EPA has not imposed any conditions that have prevented shipments of waste to appropriate facilities. As Norfolk Southern enters into contracts with facilities with greatly expanded capacity, the rate of shipments is expected to increase significantly. EPA will ensure that Norfolk Southern is held fully accountable for the damage inflicted on the community and that the company enters into binding agreements to dispose of the waste as expeditiously as possible.
- EPA's community welcome center at 25 North Market Street continues to be open to the community from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day.
- EPA personnel have been on the ground since the train derailment, working alongside federal, state, and local partners. Read details at [EPA's East Palestine, Ohio Train Derailment Emergency Response website](#).

See operational updates from other agencies supporting this incident response below.

### Columbiana County Health Department

- The first round of sampling in priority zones 1 & 2 is nearing completion. Any resident in this area who has not yet been a sampled is asked to call 330-849-3919.
- Residents in priority zones 1 & 2, who have received their first sample, will be contacted by Stantec to schedule a second-round sample. Second round sampling began on March 13th. Columbiana County Health District will continue to split samples with Stantec for this re-sampling effort.
- Priority zones 1 & 2 were determined by the potable supply sampling group, who is comprised of local, state and federal partners as well as Norfolk Southern, using the best hydrological information available, to allow sampling teams to target the areas of highest risk.
- There is ongoing discussion on expanding the current sample target areas to include a third priority zone. If and when an expansion occurs residents who have already provided their information to the water sampling hotline (330-849-3919) will be contacted by phone to schedule.

### Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- FEMA has been working closely with the state since the beginning of this incident and has been in constant contact regarding emergency operations since February 4—less than 12 hours after the train derailment.
- In total, FEMA deployed 70 personnel to help coordinate this multiagency effort and get the people of East Palestine connected to critical information and resources.

- Specifically, FEMA recently supported Interagency Community Outreach teams with door-to-door outreach in the affected area, sharing valuable information with residents and businesses.
- These teams engaged with affected residents in the community and more than 2,200 flyers were distributed to individuals or dropped off at their homes and businesses.

#### Department of Transportation (DOT) & National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

- DOT's Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) recently urged all railroad operators to create and maintain emergency response plans for the transport of hazardous materials, strengthen the accessibility of the AskRail system, and inform PHMSA when they identify responders who are not able to access PHMSA's grant-funded training. Read the [PHMSA Safety Advisory Notice: Railroad Emergency Preparedness](#).
- NTSB, an independent federal agency, is leading the investigation into the cause of the derailment. Read [NTSBs recently issued an Investigative Update](#) with factual findings on their investigation on the ground.
- Within hours of the derailment, staff from the Federal Railroad Administration and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration staff were on the scene to support the NTSB investigation.
- Upon completion of the investigation, DOT will use all relevant authorities to ensure accountability and improve safety.
- DOT is demanding immediate actions from the Class I railroads, announcing continued and expanded action from DOT, and calling on Congress to take actions that will hold the industry accountable.

#### Norfolk Southern Corporation

- For daily updates community members can view the Norfolk Southern website <https://nsmakingitright.com/>.
- Sign-ups are now available for the Norfolk Southern Rail Response Training Center Classes in Bellevue, OH. There are 8 one day classes available on the schedule – first one is March 21<sup>st</sup>. This is a free 8-hour hands-on class (8:30am to 5:30pm) and lunch will be provided.
- Go to this site to register: <https://www.transcaer.com/training/training-events/oh/norfolk-southern-rail-response-training-center/25868>. Other upcoming dates at the NS Rail Response Training Center are March 23, 25, 30 AND April 1, 6, 8, 13.

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