

Updates from the East Palestine Train Derailment Emergency Response

EAST PALESTINE, OH (June 5, 2023) –Norfolk Southern continues to excavate the north track and expects to be finished by mid-June. Excavation at the Pleasant Drive track crossing will begin today, June 5. EPA and Norfolk Southern continue to conduct air monitoring in the work zone and in the surrounding community. Sheet piling is installed to excavate the track safely without affecting the integrity of the railway. Vapor suppressants are being used to control odors around the work area. Perimeter air monitoring stations are located around the rail work zone.

While the cleanup is ongoing, EPA is reviewing work plans for further assessment and cleanup that will ensure community safety in the years that come.

Response By the Numbers *(as of June 5, 2023)*

- 57,231 tons (estimated) of solid waste shipped
- 20,021,502 gallons (estimated) of liquid waste shipped
- 653 private well samples collected
- 1,067 EPA assistance line calls received
- 848 visits to the Welcome Center

This Week

North Pleasant Drive will be closed during the week of June 5 to excavate under the railroad tracks at the road crossing. The road will likely be closed for several days, and traffic will be rerouted to James Street during this closure. During the excavation, EPA will oversee air monitoring and other controls to ensure the safety of all residents.

On June 6, from 6 to 7:30 p.m., EPA will facilitate an information session on public health with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) at the First United Presbyterian Church in East Palestine.

Public health and other assisting and cooperating agencies supporting Unified Command involved in the response to the East Palestine train derailment have provided a fact sheet as an additional source of information regarding vinyl chloride exposure and detection using medical testing. [Vinyl Chloride FAQ from the Public Health Advisory Unit \(pdf\)](#)

What to Expect Next Week

Events:

On June 14, EPA will be at the East Palestine Memorial Library for their Meet the Helpers event from 6-7 p.m.

At the derailment site:

- Contaminated soil and waste stockpiles are covered overnight and when not in use.

- Vapor suppressants are used to address odor and vapor issues associated with excavation activities.
- EPA continues to document all excavation activities, including soil confirmation sampling prior to restoration.
- Trains are operating in both directions on the southern track.

In the greater community:

- EPA has hosted a series of information sessions for community members on soil, air, private well water testing, surface water, and operations. The sessions are typically held weekly at the Way Station and First United Presbyterian church at 109 W. Rebecca St. in East Palestine, and between 20-40 community members attended per session.
- Air monitoring continues at 23 locations around the community. Review of data supports air monitoring trends that air quality has remained below screening levels.

Air Quality

EPA continues to review preliminary and final air sampling data, which supports air monitoring trends that air quality has remained below screening levels.

Soil Removal at the Derailment Site

Excavation of contaminated soil around the northern track began in late April and continues. Excavated soils are shipped off-site for proper disposal, and clean dirt is brought in to fill the excavated areas. When soil waste is loaded or staged there may be increased vapors. Continuous air monitoring is done to ensure the air remains safe. Also, a vapor suppressant foam is used on active piles to reduce odors. Some chemicals of concern, such as butyl acrylate, have a low odor threshold and can be smelled below levels of concern.

Liquid Waste Removal

Wastewater is collected to ensure water does not leave the derailment site or staging piles of contaminated soil. Wastewater is generated after rain falls on contaminated soil and is collected from cleaning and washing trucks before they leave the site.

Full-Site Characterization

EPA is reviewing Norfolk Southern plans to conduct extensive assessment work in areas surrounding the impacted tracks, including potentially impacted waterways.

Soil Sampling

Sampling associated with Phase I of the Preliminary Residential/Commercial/Agricultural Soil Sampling Plan is complete. Sample results have been provided to property owners over the phone and in writing. Preliminary EPA results and validated Norfolk Southern results are posted on EPA's website: [EPA and](#)

[Norfolk Southern Residential, Commercial and Agricultural Soil Sampling Results](#). Validated EPA results are expected within the next two weeks.

Drinking and Groundwater Sampling

Ohio EPA continues to conduct drinking water testing of East Palestine municipal water wells on a weekly basis, as well as weekly sampling of wells located between the municipal wells and the derailment site. These wells were installed to monitor for potential groundwater contamination that could be moving toward the municipal wells.

Water Quality Monitoring

Norfolk Southern continues daily surface water sampling of affected waterways under Ohio EPA oversight. Sediment samples were collected and are anticipated to be received during the next operational period.