

Updates from the East Palestine Train Derailment Emergency Response

EAST PALESTINE, OH (June 16, 2023) – Excavation at the Pleasant Drive northern track crossing will be completed this week, and train traffic will run on both the northern and southern tracks at very low speeds this weekend. The southern track will then close for additional excavation beginning next week.

EPA and Norfolk Southern continue to conduct air monitoring in the work zone and in the surrounding community. Vapor suppressants are being used to control odors around the work area. Perimeter air monitoring stations are located around the rail work zone. Sheet piling is being installed to excavate the track safely without affecting the integrity of the railway.

The latest edition of the newsletter was published on June 13 and is available on the EPA [website](#).

On June 12, EPA published to its website a plume map for the soot created during the controlled vent and burn that occurred on February 6.

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 15, 2023)*

- 71,595 tons (estimated) of solid waste shipped
- 20,685,021 gallons (estimated) of liquid waste shipped
- 663 private well samples collected
- 1,093 EPA assistance line calls received
- 881 visits to the Welcome Center

This Week

On June 14, EPA participated in the East Palestine Memorial Library “Meet the Helpers” event with the TAGA mobile monitoring unit. The event was well attended, with organizations such as East Palestine Fire Department, Ohio Edison, and the Brightside Project.

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 \(pdf\)](#)

On June 6, EPA facilitated 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. The video for this event can be found [here](#).

What to Expect Next Week

Events:

- On June 20, The Way Station and First United Presbyterian Church will host a Public Health Resource Information Session from 6 to 7 p.m. at 109 Rebecca Street in East Palestine. East

Liverpool Hospital, the Community Action Agency of Columbiana County, and Columbiana County Mental Health will present on health resources and services available for residents.

At the derailment site:

- Contaminated soil and waste are being removed for off-site treatment and disposal.
- 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.
- Sheet piling installation will be conducted during extended hours of operation, from 6 a.m. – 8 p.m. and should be completed next week.

In the greater community:

- Air monitoring continues at 23 locations around the community and will be reduced to 15 locations once excavation at the southern line is completed. When track excavation is completed, air monitoring operations will shift from track excavation monitoring to the car scrapping area and site waste removal. The fifteen air monitor locations will monitor the air within ½ mile of the site and sampling activities using summa canisters will continue. Review of data supports air monitoring trends that air quality has remained below screening levels.
- Stream assessments of Sulphur Creek and Leslie Run are continuing, with sediment washing at select locations in both streams.

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 will be completed this week. 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.