

Updates from the East Palestine Train Derailment Emergency Response

EAST PALESTINE, OH (May 18, 2023) – Norfolk Southern continues to make progress removing and excavating the north track. Excavation activities for the north track are expected to be completed by the end of this week. Waste shipments are expected to continue into June. EPA and Norfolk Southern continue to conduct air monitoring in the work zone and in the surrounding community. 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.

On May 14, EPA posted [EPA and Norfolk Southern Residential, Commercial and Agricultural Soil Sampling Results](#).

Response By the Numbers *(as of May 17, 2023)*

- 43,259 tons (estimated) of solid waste shipped
- 17,571,713 gallons (estimated) of liquid waste shipped
- 577 private well samples collected
- 1,018 EPA assistance line calls received
- 805 visitors received at the Welcome Center

This Week

On May 18, from 6 to 7 p.m., EPA will participate in an information session that will focus on the derailment site clean-up activities. During this session, EPA will provide an overview of mainline soil removal plan, an update on soil cleanup status, and a forward look at full-site assessment. The meeting will be recorded and will be available on EPA's website within a few days of the session.

What to Expect Next Week

After the north track excavation is completed, Norfolk Southern will begin backfilling the excavated area with clean fill.

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 participated in a series of informational sessions for community members on soil, air, private well water testing, and surface water. 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.
- The Welcome Center is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and closed on Sunday.

Air Quality

EPA continues to receive preliminary air sampling data. Review of the data supports air monitoring trends that air quality has remained below screening levels. Preliminary data are currently being validated prior to being finalized.

EPA's Trace Atmospheric Gas Analyzer (TAGA) bus is off-site for the next few days and mobile Proton Transfer Reaction – Mass Spectrometry (PTR-MS) vehicles are serving as a replacement with the same capability that the TAGA employs.

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.

Asbestos-containing material (ACM) was identified on the north track work area within a debris pile; ACM and affected debris will be managed and disposed of in accordance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations (ongoing). ACM has been properly labeled, containerized, and is awaiting off-site transportation and disposal (11 roll-off containers).

Shallow surface removal of soil in key areas is expected to begin following the completion of the excavation of the north track.

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 close to approving the Norfolk Southern plan to conduct extensive assessment work in areas surrounding the impacted tracks. This activity also includes full assessment of impacted waterways down to Little Beaver Creek, which will begin once EPA approves the plan.

Soil Sampling

Sampling associated with Phase I of the Preliminary Residential/Commercial/Agricultural Soil Sampling Plan is complete. Sample results are 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](#).

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.

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