
East Palestine, Ohio Train Derailment Unified Command

East Taggart Street Reopening Plan

September 21, 2023 -- East Taggart Street has been closed to traffic since the Norfolk Southern train derailment in February. Currently, traffic on the closed portion of East Taggart Street—from east of North Pleasant Drive to the Ohio-Pennsylvania border—has consisted of an average of 75 to 100 trucks per day. These trucks transport waste, equipment, and materials in and out of the cleanup work areas. Because of the risks associated with that much heavy traffic—and to maintain the safety of residents of the Village and workers—the Unified Command leading the ongoing emergency response made the decision to keep East Taggart Street closed.

Now, as the cleanup work has progressed, the Unified Command has determined that East Taggart Street can be safely opened in the overnight hours. This initial reopening will still include the presence of safety signs, lights, flagging personnel, site security, access controls and associated equipment, with continued air monitoring of the project for environmental safety.

Although there are no anticipated health risks along East Taggart Street associated with project activities, the potential for cleanup-related odors may exist. As work proceeds, to ensure worker and community safety, the Unified Command will continue to evaluate site conditions for health and safety considerations. While traffic will be able to proceed through the work areas along East Taggart Street, access into active work areas will remain restricted to ensure public safety.

The Unified Command has established the following implementation schedule:

- **Phase I (Beginning on Monday, September 25)**
Taggart Street will remain closed during daytime operations, from 5:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Overnight, East Taggart Street will be opened in both directions for all traffic to pass through the worksite. Safety controls will remain, including: signage, reduced speed, flaggers.
- **Phase II (Anticipated to begin on Monday, October 23)**
Following the conclusion of major excavation and soil removal activities, traffic on East Taggart Street will reopen in both directions all day. Periodic traffic stoppage—of up to 15 minutes or more—should be expected during daytime working hours to allow for truck traffic entering and leaving the cleanup site.
- **Phase III (Anticipated to begin at the end of the year)**
As the project continues with confirmation soil sampling (Appendix E), East Taggart Street will continue to be open to traffic in both directions all day, with intermittent traffic stoppages. This is anticipated to continue through the first quarter of 2024, when the project is currently expected to be completed.

For questions, comments, or concerns, please contact the EPA Information Line at 330-775-6517.

Unified Command includes:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Columbiana County Emergency Management Agency
Village of East Palestine
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
Norfolk Southern Corporation