



Red Hook Park Ball Fields to be cleaned up by NYC Parks under EPA oversight.

WHAT IS SECONDARY LEAD SMELTING?

Secondary lead smelting plants refine scrap or used lead materials into metallic lead of a higher purity. Such materials can include the lead plates from batteries, lead pipe or metal sheets that contain lead.

Secondary smelting can be responsible for releasing lead into the surrounding environment through lead fume emissions. Lead dust and smoke can be released through the smelting process, and slag contaminated with lead may be left over after the smelting process.

WHY IS LEAD A PROBLEM?

Lead is a toxic metal that was used for many years in paint and leaded gasoline. Lead poisoning can cause many harmful health effects, particularly in children under the age of six. Exposure to lead in soil can occur when children play in the dirt and put their hands or dusty toys in their mouths. Lead can also get into your body by breathing or swallowing lead dust, or by eating soil containing lead.

EPA and our federal partners are committed to a collaborative approach to address this threat, and improve health outcomes for our nation’s most vulnerable citizens - our children.

UPDATE ON THE CLEANUP OF BALL FIELDS 5-8 AND 9

Under the oversight of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) will begin the cleanup of Red Hook Park Ball Fields 5-8. The ball fields were contaminated with lead from a historic secondary lead smelting facility known as Columbia Smelting and Refining Works (Columbia), which once stood atop what is now Ball Field 7.

Starting in October 2018, NYC Parks’ contractors will begin prep work at Ball Fields 5-8. These activities will include: installing perimeter fencing; cutting down trees along Bay, Hicks and Henry Streets; staging materials on the ball fields; installing tree guards; and placing construction trailers along Bay and Hicks Street. Currently, Ball Field 9 is open because the lead contamination in this field is below the surface and is not as easily accessible. EPA expects the cleanup of Ball Field 9 to begin between 2020 and 2021.

Because of the large size and complex nature of this project, it will take at least 18 months to reopen Ball Fields 5-8. As a result, construction at Ball Fields 5-8 could overlap with the start of work at Ball Field 9. During that time, all ball fields will potentially be closed to the public.

WHY DO THE BALL FIELDS NEED TO BE CLEANED UP?

As part of an investigation of the former Columbia smelting plant, soil was sampled throughout all areas of Red Hook Park. Results of the sampling showed elevated lead levels from the former Columbia facility in surface soils across Ball Fields 5, 6, 7 and 8. As a result, Ball Fields 5-8 were closed in spring of 2015 and will remain closed until the cleanup is completed.

At Ball Field 9, elevated lead levels were found only in deeper soil samples. Ball Field 9 will remain open for public use until cleanup begins.

PUBLIC MEETING:
Thursday, October 25, 2018 at 6 PM
Red Hook Library
7 Wolcott Street, Brooklyn, NY 11231

If you would like information about the site please contact:

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If you would like information on other environmental concerns or the Superfund hazardous waste program contact:

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Visit the EPA's website at:

<https://www.epa.gov/superfund/columbia-smelting>

CLEANUP PLANS

Under EPA oversight, NYC Parks will remove all park features such as fencing, most of the trees, curbing, other structures and the top layer of soil. NYC Parks will place a visual barrier over the contaminated soil, and cover the barrier with one foot of clean soil or other material. Artificial turf will be installed over all of the ball fields.

A bioswale (planted areas along the fields that collect stormwater that runs off the fields when it rains), new trees and other improvements will be added. The baseball diamonds, grass cover, fencing, walkways, and associated structures will then be reinstalled. Steps will be taken to make sure the public is not exposed to contaminants during construction. The cleanup actions will significantly reduce the chance of people coming into contact with contaminated soil on these fields. The barrier and cover will be maintained and inspected regularly.

Construction activities will generate dust, which will be controlled using tools that spray water and by applying water to excavated areas. The air will be monitored throughout the cleanup to protect people's health. Details on all the steps involved in the cleanup process can be found on EPA's website for the project (see link at left). Please visit NYC Parks' website for information about plans for other fields within Red Hook Park: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/about/whats-happening/red-hook-park-remediation>.

HOW WILL I GET UPDATES?

EPA and NYC Parks will continue providing updates on the status of the Ball Field 5-9 cleanup efforts to the community in various ways, including fact sheets, letters to park users, updates to the websites and public information sessions where EPA and NYC Parks will be available to present plans and answer questions.

If you would like to receive updates for Ball Fields 5 through 9 directly via mail or email, please contact Natalie Loney at (212) 637-3639 or loney.natalie@epa.gov. EPA has established an Information Repository at the Red Hook Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, where the public can review and copy records related to EPA's investigation and the cleanup of Ball Fields 5 through 9.

SIMPLE PRECAUTIONARY STEPS TO REDUCE YOUR LEAD EXPOSURE

The following steps are recommended to reduce your potential exposure to lead contamination that may be present in urban soils.

- Remove shoes at the door before entering your home to prevent tracking in any dirt that may be on your shoes. Clean the bottom of your shoes with a wet wipe or paper towel.
- Wash your hands and face after visiting these ball fields and always before eating, drinking, or smoking.
- Avoid digging into or disturbing soil below the surface of the fields.



In May 2017, EPA established a task force to restore the Superfund program to its rightful place at the center of the Agency's core mission to protect health and the environment.

epa.gov/superfund/superfund-task-force