

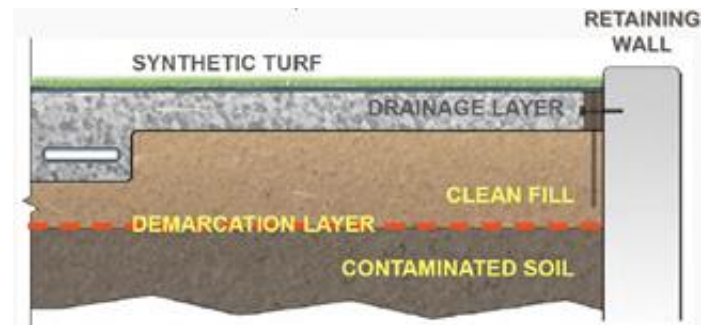
Red Hook Park Ball Fields to be cleaned up by NYC Parks under EPA oversight.

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

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is continuing to oversee work being conducted by the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) to clean up Red Hook Park Ball Fields 5-8. This work began in March 2019. 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.

NYC Parks’ contractors recently completed construction of the retaining wall for the synthetic turf at Ball Fields 5-8 and completed work to provide drainage on Henry Street and the bioswale piping installation. Work to provide drainage on Lorraine Street and the bioswale wall construction is in progress.

Work at Ball Field 9 started in September 2019. Preliminary activities included: installing perimeter fencing; dust netting; cutting down trees and pruning trees along Bay Street; staging material on the ball field; installing tree guards; removing aboveground fixtures (fencing, backstop, goal posts, benches, tables, and drinking fountains); building construction entrance; electrical work (removing DOT and sports lighting); and placing construction trailers along Clinton Street and Halleck Street. Contractors have almost completed the removal of the top six inches of soil at Ballfield 9.



NYC Parks layout of barrier and cover for Red Hook Park Ball Fields

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.

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. 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 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 had remained open for public use until cleanup began in September 2019.



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

If you would like information about the site please contact:

Natalie Loney

U.S. EPA

Community Involvement Coordinator

(212) 637-3639

Toll Free: (800) 346-5009

loney.natalie@epa.gov

Irmgard Lopez

U.S. EPA

On-Scene Coordinator

(732) 906-6813

Lopez.Irmgard@epa.gov

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. 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. Dust generated by construction activities will be controlled using water spray 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 to the community on the status of the Ball Field 5-9 cleanup efforts 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 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