



PROTECT YOUR HEALTH

Living Near Quemetco



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Dear Resident:

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is providing information on the potential health impacts of lead and arsenic. This booklet is a resource for residents living near the Quemetco, Inc., a battery recycling facility located in the City of Industry, and is intended to help you understand what you can do to protect yourself, your family, your pets, and the environment.

This booklet includes detailed information on:

- How lead and arsenic can affect your health
- Information for your doctor or health care provider
- Information about soil testing
- Action steps you can take around your home, yard, and garden
- How to care for your pets
- What you can do to manage stress
- Resources for additional information

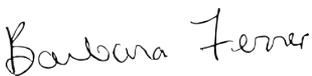
As part of our commitment to promoting health equity, and ensuring optimal health and well-being for all residents of Los Angeles County, Public Health is working with state regulators and local partners to address potential health impacts and provide appropriate testing of the air and soil.

Additionally, Public Health contributes to a taskforce that includes members of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, the Departments of Public Works and Fire, and County Counsel to continually monitor and work on the issues related to this contamination.

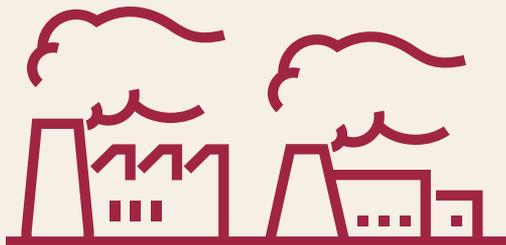
We encourage you to review the information in this booklet with your family and neighbors. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact our Community Hotline: (213) 738-3232.

We look forward to working with you and your community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Ferrer". The script is cursive and fluid.

Barbara Ferrer, Ph.D., M.P.H., M.Ed.
Director



Lead processing and recycling activities have taken place since 1959 at the lead battery recycling plant now operated by Quemetco, Inc. These operations have released lead and arsenic into nearby communities. Although the level of exposure to residents who were living near the plant is not known, contact with high levels of lead and arsenic increases the risk of developing cancer, breathing diseases, and learning problems. This booklet offers answers to some questions you may have.

To protect the public's health, specially-trained workers are checking the area around the plant to determine the levels of chemicals in the air and soil.

The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) is monitoring for lead, and arsenic in the air. In 2016-17, the California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) required testing for lead, and other contaminants in soil within a quarter-mile of the plant. Results show that soils on some of the properties have tested higher than expected for lead, and may need additional testing for arsenic or other chemicals. DTSC has requested additional testing farther out from the facility. In addition, DTSC has ordered Quemetco to clean up contaminated soil within and adjacent to the facility.

Continued air monitoring and additional soil sampling are needed to fully assess environmental risks to the health of people who live in these neighborhoods.

KEY CHEMICALS AND HEALTH RISKS

Key chemicals of concern are lead (a metal) and arsenic (a chemical element).

- **LEAD:** Can harm the brain, kidneys, liver, and other organs. Children less than six years old and pregnant women are at higher risk.
- **ARSENIC:** Repeated contact is linked to cancers of the skin, lung, digestive tract, liver, and kidney.

HOW LEAD AND ARSENIC CAN AFFECT YOUR HEALTH

There are many sources of lead in our environment, such as our food and beverages, and our indoor and outdoor environment. It is important to control all sources of lead wherever possible. Eating lead or breathing very high amounts of lead dust can cause lead poisoning. Lead can hurt the brain, kidneys, liver, and other organs.

Children less than six years old and pregnant women are at higher risk. In children, lead poisoning affects their growth, learning, and behavior.

In pregnant women, lead poisoning may cause high blood pressure, the baby to be born too early (premature birth), or loss of the baby (miscarriage).

Most people who have lead poisoning do not look or feel sick. The only way to know if you have lead poisoning is with a blood lead test. Signs of possible lead poisoning include headaches, nausea, weakness, and trouble eating, sleeping, or paying attention.

Arsenic exposure over a long time can raise your chances of getting certain kinds of cancer, but there is no available medical test to determine that risk. Arsenic poisoning is rare and usually does not come from exposure to arsenic in air and soil.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Get your blood tested for lead.

Ask your medical provider to test for lead in your blood. As an alternative, free blood lead testing is available through the Public Health Department for residents and workers who live near Quemetco. A member of our department will work with you and your family to obtain a blood lead test. Test results are confidential and will be sent to you directly from the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health.

For more information, please call the Quemetco Hotline at (213) 738-3232.



Inform your doctor.

Tell your doctor or health care provider that you live in the Quemetco area and might be exposed to lead or arsenic. Ask for these lab tests: CBC, metabolic count, and urine. While there is no definitive test for arsenic, your doctor may be able to address other concerns and assess you for possible health effects.

Share the section on page 11 with your doctor or health care provider. If you don't have a doctor or health insurance, please call 211.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Reduce your contact with lead and dirt:

- Wash your hands and toys often to lower the transfer of lead and dirt from hand-to-mouth.
- Don't let children play on or eat dirt. Playing on grass or sand is better.
- Take off your shoes before coming into your home. The dirt from your shoes may contain lead.
- Keep your pets' paws clean. They may bring lead into your home from the dirt outside.
- Wash clothes separately if you have been working or playing in the dirt outside.
- If you garden, grow your fruits and vegetables in containers. Buy your soil instead of using the dirt in your yard.



GET YOUR SOIL TESTED

Be aware of chemicals in soil.

Arsenic and lead in soil can affect your health and your plants. These chemicals may be in soil because of lead paint, pesticides, treated wood, or heavy traffic. Lead and arsenic can also come from factories that recycle batteries, such as Quemetco, and from spills, runoff, wastewater, or air emissions that settle into soil or water.

Get your soil tested for lead and arsenic to:

- Know if the soil around your home has high levels of lead or arsenic;
- Learn how to avoid lead and arsenic if either is found in your soil; and
- Put your home on the priority list for future clean-up activities.

To find out if you can have your soil tested at no cost or if your property has already been tested and you have not received the results, contact DTSC at 1-866-495-5651 (Press "3", then press "1"). If you do not qualify for free soil testing by DTSC, you may be able to hire a private contractor for professional soil testing for a nominal fee. When searching for a professional contractor, look for those with a CDPH LRC-certified Inspector/Assessor certification.

If high levels of lead or arsenic are found in your soil test, your property will be ranked according to the DTSC priority categories. DTSC will prioritize cleaning up properties with the highest lead levels and risk first.

WHAT YOU CAN DO IN YOUR YARD AND GARDEN

Reduce lead and arsenic in your garden.

- Get your garden soil tested for lead and arsenic.
- Add compost or fertilizer which can help to reduce the amount of these chemicals.
- Cover existing soil with raised beds.
- Plant root and leaf crops in raised beds or separate containers.

Avoid contact with lead and arsenic in your garden.

- Wear gloves when gardening and wash hands after.
- Water your garden to reduce dust production.
- Apply mulch on the soil surface.
- Avoid bringing soil into your home.
- Wash all produce thoroughly. Peel any produce that touches the soil.
- Avoid touching your mouth while in the garden.



WHAT YOU CAN DO FOR YOUR PETS

Your pets can also be exposed to lead and arsenic. Pets can breathe or swallow dust or dirt from your skin, their fur, the soil, and their water bowls.

What lead poisoning can look like in animals:

- Upset stomach or vomiting
- Diarrhea or blood in their stool
- Increase in sleep or decrease in activity
- Loss of appetite
- Behavioral changes such as aggression and sensitivity to noise



Reduce your pet's contact with lead.

- Wash your hands often.
- Keep pets from eating soil or dirt in your yard or chewing on painted surfaces.

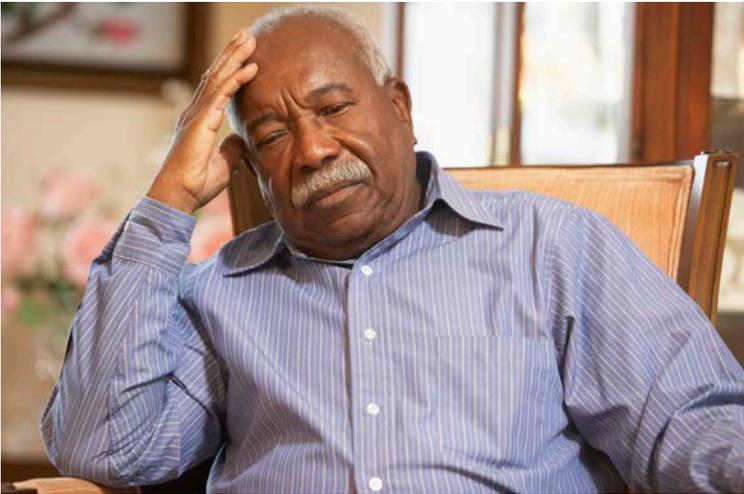
Inform your veterinarian.

- If you think your pet is getting sick from lead, call your veterinarian.
- If your pet has lead poisoning, check each household member for lead poisoning as well.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO MANAGE YOUR STRESS

This situation may cause stress, anxiety, and fear. Here are some things that can help:

- **Stay informed.** Attend community meetings for resources and education. Refer to credible sources for updates on the situation (see resources on page 14).
- **Be honest with children and give them information that is appropriate for their age.** Remember to stay calm; children often feel what you feel.
- **Know the local medical and mental health resources in your community.**



Share this section with your doctor or health care provider. If you don't have a doctor or health insurance, please call 211.

INFORMATION FOR YOUR DOCTOR OR HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

Your patient lives near the Quemetco, Inc. battery recycling plant in the City of Industry. Quemetco may have released harmful chemicals such as arsenic and lead into nearby communities. The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) has collected soil samples from the neighborhoods around the Quemetco facility. The County of Los Angeles is providing health information, educational materials, and other available resources to community members.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health encourages you to properly examine any of your patients that may live near the Quemetco plant and provide all needed medical resources for appropriate assessment and treatment.

WHAT YOU CAN DO AS A HEALTH CARE PROVIDER

- Take a routine history, assess physical and mental development, and order the following screening laboratory tests: CBC, comprehensive metabolic panel, urine analysis, and blood lead level.
- If the patient is uninsured: Refer the patient to call 211 for assistance obtaining health insurance.
- Encourage practices that reduce contact with lead and arsenic:
 - Wash hands and toys often.
 - Don't let children play on or eat dirt.
 - Take off shoes before coming into the home.
 - Keep pets clean.
 - Thoroughly wash fruits and vegetables that are home-grown.

NOTES

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RESOURCES

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/eh/quemetco>

(213) 738-3232

Free or Low-Cost Healthcare and Referrals

2-1-1

California Department of Toxic Substances and Control

<https://dtsc.ca.gov/hw-projects/quemetco-battery-recycling>

1-866-495-5651, press "3", then press "1"

South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD)

<http://www.aqmd.gov/home/rules-compliance/compliance/toxic-hot-spots-ab-2588/quemetco>

(800)-CUT-SMOG (288-7664)

Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health

24/7 Helpline

(800) 854-7771

Los Angeles County Department of Health Services

<http://dhs.lacounty.gov/wps/portal/dhs/locations>

American Cancer Society

<https://www.cancer.org>

Clean Air Coalition

<http://www.cleanaircoalition.org>

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