

# SLUPERFUND

## Fact Sheet

### RUSTON/NORTH TACOMA

Ruston and Tacoma, Washington



U.S. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

May 2000

## Ruston/North Tacoma Residential Study Area

### The 5-Year Review for the Ruston/North Tacoma Residential Area Cleanup is Complete

The U. S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has conducted the first five-year review of the Superfund cleanup actions for the Ruston/North Tacoma residential area. The Ruston/North Tacoma site is part of the Commencement Bay Nearshore/Tideflats (CB/NT) Superfund site. Under Superfund law, EPA must conduct five-year reviews when any hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants remain at the site (in this case, elevated levels of arsenic and lead will remain in the soil of residential yards). The purpose of the five-year review is to determine whether the remedy at the site is still protective and moving toward the cleanup goal. The reviews must occur no less often than each five years after the start of the cleanup action to assure that human health and the environment are being protected.

The cleanup goal at the Ruston/North Tacoma Superfund site is to reduce potential exposure to arsenic and lead contaminated soil, dust, and slag when the work is finished. Below is a summary of the conclusions and recommendations of the review. If you would like to review the entire five-

year review report, it can be found at the information repositories listed at the end of this fact sheet.

### *Background*

The site includes approximately 950 acres in an arc about one mile radius around the former Asarco Tacoma Smelter. It consists of the Town of Ruston and a northern portion of the City of Tacoma, Washington. Land use is primarily residential and includes schools, playgrounds, and parks. The site includes an estimated population of 4,290 people, and about 1,820 housing units. The contamination is the result of air-borne emissions from past smelting operations and consists primarily of arsenic and lead in surface soils. Smelter slag is also contaminated and has been used by residents in various applications, including driveways, walkways, and other areas as crushed rock.

### On-Going Work

Asarco is conducting soil sampling and cleanup actions. After obtaining permission from the property owners, properties are first

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sampled to determine whether they need to be cleaned up, and to what extent and depth. Soil in excess of the action levels of 230 parts per million (ppm) arsenic and 500 ppm lead is being excavated and replaced with clean soil, and the properties are landscaped. Slag that has been used as crushed rock is also being removed.

In areas where soil concentrations of arsenic are between 20 ppm and 230 ppm, and lead concentrations are between 250 ppm and 500 ppm, residents are being provided with educational information on steps that they can take to reduce potential exposure to the residual contamination. A workgroup, called the Program for Area Cleanup Education (PACE), is responsible for developing the educational program and materials.

The site is divided into four areas or zones, and sampling and cleanup efforts are proceeding from the most to the least contaminated areas. Sampling in zones 1 through 3 was completed in 1999, with cleanup to be completed in 2003. Sampling of properties in zone 4 has not yet been completed, and it is still too early to predict when cleanup in zone 4 will be completed.

## Results of the Five-Year Review

Sampling, soil removal, soil replacement and sod have all been done according to plan, and Asarco and its contractors are working cooperatively to resolve any site specific issues as they arise. Community involvement, as well as the overall educational program, is being conducted by Asarco. EPA did not receive any

new information about arsenic and lead exposure or toxicity that warrants reconsideration of the current cleanup action levels at the Ruston site.

## Recommendations and Follow-up Actions

There are some property owners who have refused access to their property for sampling or cleanup. Asarco should track these properties and periodically contact those individuals to determine if they have changed their minds and would like their property sampled. Resampling at some of the properties that have already been cleaned up should occur to determine if recontamination is a potential issue. Prior to the completion of the cleanup, contamination on the steep slopes surrounding the Burlington Northern railroad tracks will have to be considered.

EPA will continue to look at new information on arsenic toxicity. If views on arsenic exposure change significantly, a revised risk assessment may be warranted to determine if changes to the arsenic cleanup level should be considered.

## Summary

The cleanup remedy at the Ruston/North Tacoma Superfund site is expected to be protective of human health and the environment upon completion. A review every five years is required by law, and the next review will be conducted by March 2005.



## Where You Can Review the Information

### In Ruston:

Ruston Town Hall	5117 North Winnifred
Asarco Information Center	5311 North Commercial

### In Tacoma:

Tacoma Main Public Library Northwest Room	1102 Tacoma Avenue South
City of Tacoma Environmental Commission	747 Market Street Suite 1120
Tacoma Pierce County Health Department	3629 South D Street
Citizens for a Healthy Bay	917 Pacific Avenue Suite 406

### In Olympia:

Washington Department of Ecology	300 Desmond Drive SE
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### In Seattle:

Environmental Protection Agency	1200 Sixth Avenue 7th Floor Records Center
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### For More Information

If you have questions or would like more information, please call Mary Kay Voytilla, EPA Project Manager, at 206-553-2712, or Jeanne O'Dell, Community Involvement Coordinator, at 206-553-6919, or toll free at 1-800-424-4372.

To ensure effective communication with everyone, additional services can be made available to persons with disabilities by contacting one of the numbers listed above.



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Environmental Protection  
Agency

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