

EPA Continues to Hold Norfolk Southern Accountable for Train Derailment Cleanup Efforts, Interagency Community Outreach Teams Distribute Over 2,000 Informational Flyers to Affected Residents

EAST PALESTINE, Ohio – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) continues to hold Norfolk Southern accountable for the train derailment that took place on Feb. 3 in East Palestine, Ohio, announcing yesterday that the company would be required to test for dioxins, under EPA oversight, and immediately cleanup if contaminants from the derailment are found at levels that jeopardize people’s health. More information on that announcement can be found [here](#).

Additionally, the Biden-Harris Administration also shared today that Interagency Community Outreach teams have distributed more than 2,000 informational flyers across the affected area, hand-delivering critical information to residents and businesses.

Operational Updates:

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

- EPA has conducted 593 home re-entry screenings to date and continues 24/7 air monitoring at 21 stations throughout the community. No detections of vinyl chloride or hydrogen chloride have been identified.
- EPA also approved Norfolk Southern’s plan to remove the railroad tracks and to excavate the contaminated soil at the accident site. Work to remove the tracks started this morning.
- Approximately 300 residents attended the public meeting and resource fair held by state, local, and federal agencies on March 2. Staff from EPA, The Department of Health and Human Services, Ohio EPA and other agencies were present, as were representatives from Norfolk Southern.
- EPA’s community welcome center at 25 North Market Street is now open to the community from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm every day.
- In response to concerns shared by residents, EPA recently announced that it will require Norfolk Southern to sample directly for dioxins under our oversight, and we will direct the company to conduct immediate clean up if contaminants from the derailment are found at levels that jeopardize people’s health. EPA has, and will continue to, sample for “indicator chemicals,” which based on test results to date, suggest a low probability for release of dioxins from this incident.

Department of Transportation (DOT) & National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

- Today, DOT’s Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration (PHMSA) urged all railroad operators to create and maintain emergency response plans for the transport of hazardous materials, strengthen the accessibility of the AskRail system, and inform PHMSA when they identify responders who are not able to access PHMSA’s grant-funded training. The full advisory can be found [here](#).

- NTSB, an independent federal agency, is leading the investigation into the cause of the derailment. NTSB recently issued an Investigative Update with factual findings on their investigation on the ground: <https://www.nts.gov/news/press-releases/Pages/NR20230214.aspx>
- Within hours of the derailment, staff from the Federal Railroad Administration and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration staff were on the scene to support the NTSB investigation.
- Upon completion of the investigation, DOT will use all relevant authorities to ensure accountability and improve safety.
- DOT is demanding immediate actions from the Class I railroads, announcing continued and expanded action from DOT, and calling on Congress to take actions that will hold the industry accountable.
- More information here: <https://www.transportation.gov/briefing-room/us-department-transportation-fact-sheet-steps-forward-freight-rail-industry-safety>

Health and Human Services (HHS) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)/Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR)

- CDC/ATSDR conducted Assessment of Chemical Exposure (ACE) investigation surveys in East Palestine yesterday and has completed 273 to date in Ohio and Pennsylvania.
- The agency continues to coordinate the kickoff of an ACE investigation for derailment first responders and plans to begin administering the surveys on Sunday.
- CDC/ATSDR participated in last night's public meeting and open house at East Palestine High School to hear public concerns and answer questions about available public health resources.

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

- In total, FEMA has deployed nearly 70 personnel to the impacted area and has been assisting with outreach across the affected communities to ensure that we are meeting people where they are and connecting them to critical federal, state and local resources.
- Specifically, Interagency Community Outreach staff have been going door to door in the affected area sharing information about available resources. These interagency teams have been distributing a tri-fold flyer developed by EPA and FEMA that contains all of the information a resident might need to get help.
- Since last Saturday, these teams have been engaging with affected residents in the community. More than 2,000 flyers have been handed to individuals or dropped off at their homes and businesses. These teams have connected with every Ohio and Pennsylvania residence and business that local leaders and state officials have requested they visit.
- Through an interagency agreement, FEMA has been supporting EPA's activities by utilizing our National Processing Service Center (NPSC) to assist with responding to inquiries and direct those with questions to appropriate resources. As of today, over 1,300 residents have been referred to the call center.
- As FEMA staff help interagency partners with this outreach, they will continue to support

operational coordination, logistical planning and unity of effort.

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