

Updates from the East Palestine Train Derailment Emergency Response

EAST PALESTINE, OH (June 22, 2023) – Replacement of the north track was completed on June 16. The north and south tracks operated over the weekend with slow traffic. The south track closed on June 19 to complete remaining excavation activities near the N. Pleasant Drive crossing.

EPA and Norfolk Southern continue to conduct air monitoring in the work zone and in the surrounding community. Vapor suppressants are being used to control odors around the work area. Perimeter air monitoring stations are located around the rail work zone. Sheet piling is being installed to excavate near the track safely without affecting the integrity of the railway.

The latest edition of the newsletter was published on June 20 and is available on the EPA [website](#).

While the cleanup is ongoing, EPA is reviewing work plans for further assessment and cleanup that will ensure community safety in the years that come.

Response By the Numbers

- 72,456 tons (estimated) of solid waste shipped (*as of June 19, 2023*)
- 21,289,037 gallons (estimated) of liquid waste shipped (*as of June 19, 2023*)
- 694 private well samples collected (*as of June 19, 2023*)
- 1,102 EPA assistance line calls received (*as of June 21, 2023*)
- 896 visits to the Welcome Center (*as of June 21, 2023*)

This Week

- On June 20, The Way Station and First United Presbyterian Church hosted a Public Health Resource Information Session from 6 to 7 p.m. at 109 Rebecca Street in East Palestine. East Liverpool Hospital, the Community Action Agency of Columbiana County, and Columbiana County Mental Health presented on health resources and services available for residents. Video of the session will be available on the [web site](#) next week.
- On June 21, NTSB held a [public meeting](#).
- On June 22-23, NTSB will hold [investigative hearings](#), which are open to the public. These hearings are a fact-finding step in NTSB's safety investigation, and the testimony will become part of the public record of the investigation. Day 1 focused on hazard communications and emergency responder preparedness for the initial emergency response and circumstances that led to the decision to vent and burn five vinyl chloride tank cars. Day 2 will focus on wheel bearings and wayside defect detectors and rail tank car safety.
- Sheet piling installation will be conducted during extended hours of operation, from 6 a.m. – 8 p.m. and should be completed this week.

What to Expect Next Week

At the derailment site:

- Contaminated soil and waste are being removed for off-site treatment and disposal.
- Vapor suppressants are used to address odor and vapor issues associated with excavation activities.
- EPA continues to document all excavation activities, including soil confirmation sampling prior to restoration.
- Train traffic should resume on both tracks by June 26.

In the greater community:

- Air monitoring continues at 23 locations around the community and will be reduced to 15 locations once excavation at the southern line is completed. When track excavation is completed, air monitoring operations will shift from track excavation monitoring to the car scrapping area and site waste removal. The fifteen air monitor locations will monitor the air within ½ mile of the site and sampling activities using summa canisters will continue. Review of data supports air monitoring trends that air quality has remained below screening levels.
- Stream assessments of Sulphur Creek and Leslie Run are continuing, with sediment washing at locations in both streams.

Air Quality

EPA continues to review preliminary and final air sampling data, which supports air monitoring trends that air quality has remained below screening levels.

Soil Removal at the Derailment Site

Excavation of contaminated soil around the northern track began in late April and will be completed this week. Excavated soils are shipped off-site for proper disposal, and clean dirt is brought in to fill the excavated areas. When soil waste is loaded or staged there may be increased vapors. Continuous air monitoring is done to ensure the air remains safe. Also, a vapor suppressant foam is used on active piles to reduce odors. Some chemicals of concern, such as butyl acrylate, have a low odor threshold and can be smelled below levels of concern.

Liquid Waste Removal

Wastewater is collected to ensure water does not leave the derailment site or staging piles of contaminated soil. Wastewater is generated after rain falls on contaminated soil and is collected from cleaning and washing trucks before they leave the site.

Full-Site Characterization

EPA is reviewing Norfolk Southern plans to conduct extensive assessment work in areas surrounding the impacted tracks, including potentially impacted waterways.

Soil Sampling

Sampling associated with Phase I of the Preliminary Residential/Commercial/Agricultural Soil Sampling Plan is complete. Sample results have been provided to property owners over the phone and in writing.

Preliminary EPA results and validated Norfolk Southern results are posted on EPA's website: [EPA and Norfolk Southern Residential, Commercial and Agricultural Soil Sampling Results](#). Validated EPA results are expected within the next two weeks.

Drinking and Groundwater Sampling

Ohio EPA continues to conduct drinking water testing of East Palestine municipal water wells on a weekly basis, as well as weekly sampling of wells located between the municipal wells and the derailment site. These wells were installed to monitor for potential groundwater contamination that could be moving toward the municipal wells.

Water Quality Monitoring

Norfolk Southern continues daily surface water sampling of affected waterways under Ohio EPA oversight. Sediment samples were collected and are anticipated to be received during the next operational period.