Los Angeles County's Response to Contamination from the Exide Battery Plant:

Information for Los Angeles County Employees Working Near Exide in Vernon, CA

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (Public Health) is working with state and local agencies to address environmental contamination in the area surrounding the Exide Technologies facility in the City of Vernon. Operations at Exide released harmful toxins into the environment throughout the long history of its operation. The Exide facility is no longer in operation and Public Health is working to determine the extent of contamination in the industrial zones surrounding Exide and nearby residential homes. Preliminary sampling shows the presence of contaminants throughout the community that may be present in your work zones. Initial test results show that toxins, like lead and arsenic, are in soil and dust samples from areas near the plant and close to the LA River. State and local agencies are focused on the following actions:

ACTION 1

FIND

Quickly find contaminated areas.

ACTION 2

CLEAN

Facilitate lead removal and cleaning of homes, yards, and public spaces.

ACTION 3

INFORM

Provide information, health screenings, and other resources to community members.

This sheet relates to **Action 3: Provide information, health screenings, and other resources to community members.** As an LA County employee that works in affected areas, it's important that you learn more about how you can keep yourself and your loved ones safe from lead and other toxins.

1. How does the contamination affect my health?

The toxins increase the risk of cancer, breathing diseases, and learning problems. Chronic exposure to lead may damage the brain, kidneys, liver, and other organs. Kids less than 6 years old and pregnant women are at higher risk. In kids, lead poisoning affects their growth, learning, and behavior. In pregnant women, lead poisoning causes high blood pressure, the baby to be born too early (premature birth), or losing the baby (miscarriage).

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
www.publichealth.lacounty.gov
1-800-LA-4-LEAD (1-800-524-5323)

County of Los Angeles Public Health

Most people whose health has been impacted by lead do not look or act sick. The only way to know if you have lead poisoning is with a blood lead test. Some signs of lead poisoning may include headaches, nausea, weakness, and trouble eating, sleeping, or paying attention.

2. How do people come into contact with these toxins?

Both arsenic and lead in soil and dust around Exide can put people at risk for exposure when it becomes airborne and can settle on clothing and shoes. You cannot see lead dust, but it can get on your hands, face, and clothes. You take lead dust from your job to your family when you wear your work clothes and shoes home. Lead dust can get in your car. It can get on furniture, floors, and carpets. Your child can swallow this lead dust and become poisoned.

Exposure	Definition
Breathing in lead fumes or lead dust	• Lead fumes are made when metal is heated or soldered. Lead dust is made when metal is cut or when lead paint is sanded or removed with a heat gun. • Lead fumes and dust don't have an odor, so you may not know you're being exposed.
Ingesting lead dust	• Lead dust can settle on food, water, clothes, and other items. If you eat, drink, or smoke in areas where lead is processed or stored, you could ingest lead dust. • Not washing your hands before you eat or touch your mouth can lead you to ingest lead. • Sometimes, ingested lead may leave a metallic taste in your mouth.
Touching lead dust	• You could be exposed if you touch lead and then touch your eyes, nose, or mouth. • Lead dust can also get on your clothes and your hair. If this happens, it's possible to bring lead dust into your car or home, which may also expose your family.

3. What can I do to protect my loved ones from lead?

Until the State agencies have fully assessed and cleaned up the environment surrounding Exide, please take the following actions:

- Use protective clothing according to your job and worksite's policies and procedures.
- Wash hands often. Wash your face and hands with soap and warm water before leaving work.
- Eat and drink in areas where lead-containing products are not handled or processed.
- Take off shoes before coming into your home.
- Shower, wash your hair, and change your clothes at work if possible or as soon as you get home.
- Put dirty work shoes and clothes in a plastic bag.
- Empty work clothes from the plastic bag right into the washing machine. Wash work clothes separately from other clothes. Run the empty washing machine again to rinse out the lead.
- Request a free blood lead test. Call the **Blood Lead Screening Hotline at 844-888-2290**. Free blood lead testing is available to any person who lives, works, or goes to school in communities near Exide. All results are confidential.
- Talk with your doctor about workplace lead exposure if you are breastfeeding, pregnant, or planning to get pregnant.

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