

Questions and Answers about the Investigation Process

Who selected the nine properties? Were all of the properties selected within city limits and were all connected to municipal water?

EPA selected the properties to be tested with input from the community. Eight of the nine properties selected were from the group of properties previously identified as containing CCBs. The final property was selected by the community. All the properties were within the Town limits. Not all parcels included in the sampling were developed and are connected to municipal water.

How does EPA/NIPSCO know this is only limited to 45 properties?

The locations of CCB deposits in the Town have been identified through several efforts. First, EPA conducted an initial investigation early in the history of the project. An EPA investigator interviewed a number of Town residents in 2002. His interview focused specifically on the location of CCBs and the circumstances regarding their placement in the Town. Second, in 2003 and 2004, CCB deposits were encountered during the installation of municipal water service in the Town. The location and depth of CCBs were logged, and samples of material in rights-of-way were collected and analyzed at that time. Third, as part of the Remedial Investigation (RI), a visual inspection was performed to identify the location of visible deposits as well as suspect areas. The visual inspection was conducted following an EPA-approved work plan. This information is included in the RI Report, which can be found on EPA's website: <http://www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/pines/index.htm>.

If I believe (or am concerned) that my property contains CCBs – but I'm not on the list – can I have my property sampled?

If you wish to have your property assessed, and that property is within the Area of Investigation, please contact Dr. Lisa Bradley of Haley & Aldrich, Inc. at 978-846-3463, or lbradley@haleyaldrich.com. Dr. Bradley can help you determine whether your property is within the Area of Investigation, and if so, will ask you for the information needed to send you an access agreement.

For affected properties, what are the detected arsenic levels (range)? What is considered to be an "acceptable level"?

For the properties that were tested, levels ranged from below detection to a high level of 888 mg/kg (this specific result was detected well below the surface). "Acceptable levels" are based on assumptions regarding the nature and duration of exposure (for

example, ingesting a certain quantity of CCBs or soils containing arsenic over a lifetime). EPA or ATSDR officials can help explain the acceptable levels to you in more detail.

How long has it been known that coal ash contains arsenic? If NIPSCO was aware of 45 properties that contained CCBs, why didn't NIPSCO test properties sooner?

Arsenic is a naturally-occurring substance found in soils and in coal and, therefore, CCBs. Samples of CCB deposits were collected early on in the project, including deposits found in the community along public rights-of-way during the installation of municipal water service lines in 2003-2004. The results of the testing in the rights-of-way showed arsenic concentrations below levels of concern. The belief at that time was that any CCBs deposited in the yards would be the same as materials in the rights-of-way. The recent testing indicates that the material in some yards is different from the material in the rights-of-way.

Should I be concerned that runoff from the road or other properties might make its way onto my property?

It is unlikely that CCBs from roads or affected yards have materially impacted your property. The migration mechanisms for surface soils such as runoff, wind, and or human activity (digging it up and moving it) are unlikely to have transported a sufficient quantity of material to give rise to a concern. Test results have not identified any impacts of concern in Brown ditch, the main drainage feature of the area, and the fact that vegetation is maintained at most yards limits the ability of wind to move soils. Further, CCBs in the roads and rights-of-way are different from the material in the yards that have high arsenic levels. The material comprising the roads appears to be predominantly bottom ash and boiler slag. This material is low in arsenic. As such, there should be no risk of impact affecting your property from the roads.

If this issue dates back several decades, then why isn't this material on every single property in the community? Wouldn't it blow into other yards over the years or even travel from one property to the next because of run off?

When CCBs were made available to residents several decades ago as yard filler and landscaping materials, it was not uniformly distributed in the community. Similarly, arsenic levels are not uniformly distributed. CCBs were selectively distributed in yards where property owners used CCBs as fill to level their property. The elevated levels of arsenic are associated with these deposits in some of the yards. Testing of CCBs in the roads and rights-of-way shows arsenic levels that are not of concern. In some cases, these samples were collected from rights-of-way immediately adjacent to affected

properties. Accordingly, wind transport or runoff does not appear to be occurring to a significant extent.

Does the CCB issue extend beyond the Town of Pines?

Based on a thorough review of all available information, we are not aware of any other community where this is an issue.

Who is going to pay for all of this work?

NIPSCO will be undertaking the work under an Administrative Order issued by the EPA. NIPSCO will bear the cost of the cleanup unless it can identify other responsible parties connected to these materials.

How are EPA and NIPSCO going to communicate with residents?

NIPSCO will directly contact the owners of all properties known to contain CCB deposits where remediation is needed. Residents with any questions or concerns may contact:

EPA (Jacob Hassan, 312-886-6864),

ATSDR (Mark Johnson, 312-886-0840), or

Haley & Aldrich (Lisa Bradley, 978-846-3463)

A community website has been maintained by NIPSCO during this project. We are continuing to post information to the website to keep the community informed: www.pinesupdate.com.

EPA also maintains a project website at:

<http://www.epa.gov/region5/cleanup/pines/index.htm>

Health-Related Questions and Answers Is it safe to plant/eat vegetables from a garden?

For properties where CCBs were used as fill, we suggest, in an abundance of caution, that garden produce not be consumed and that a produce garden not be planted until the removal action is completed. Gardening at other properties is not expected to pose a cause for concern.

Is it safe to walk pets outside? Is it safe for me to walk outside?

Testing of CCBs in the roads and rights-of-way shows that arsenic levels at those locations are not of concern. However, for residential properties where the presence of CCBs is known or suspected, people and their pets should avoid contact with exposed soil until the contamination can be sampled and remediated.

What activities are considered safe/not safe for us to do?

Until the investigation and any removal actions are completed, it is recommended that you follow the best practices described below to reduce potential for exposures to impacted soils:

- Wash with soap and water after gardening or any time before you eat.
- Minimize children's and pet's direct contact with bare soil by laying down wood chips or maintaining grass cover, especially if there is visible fill material.
- Consider growing vegetables in raised beds with clean soil (at least 10 inches deep). Use untreated wood to make the beds.
- Brush off any soil from your clothes and remove shoes and gloves before entering your home.
- If visible amounts of soil are tracked inside, mop or sweep in that area to remove soil.

Groundwater Questions and Answers If this isn't currently a groundwater issue, won't the arsenic in soil eventually make its way to groundwater?

Results of groundwater testing that has been conducted over the past eight years in the areas outside of Yard 520 continues to demonstrate that arsenic is not migrating to groundwater at levels of concern. Arsenic has not appeared in groundwater at levels of concern despite the fact that the deposits are believed to have been there for at least forty years. Testing for arsenic was included in the regularly scheduled groundwater testing conducted this spring.

Why are there still properties/homes that don't have municipal water in the community? Why doesn't NIPSCO just install water for everyone?

Municipal water service was installed to those properties suspected at the time to have groundwater potentially impacted by CCBs, and to other nearby properties adjacent to the new municipal water service lines. The groundwater in the Town has been monitored and tested for 8 years. All of the testing demonstrates that the groundwater is largely unaffected by CCB constituents. However, this is not to say the water is safe for consumption. The shallow groundwater, where many of the private wells are completed, has been adversely impacted by other contaminants including bacteria commonly associated with septic systems.

If you're not concerned there's an issue with groundwater, then why are some people still getting bottled water?

NIPSCO and Brown agreed to provide bottled water until the completion of the Remedial Investigation/ Feasibility Study. The Feasibility Study is not yet completed. However, as part of the spring groundwater sampling, NIPSCO and Brown have offered to sample private wells of those eligible to receive bottled water, and this testing is being conducted where access agreements are provided. Once the private well testing is completed, the bottled water service will be discontinued at a time agreed with the EPA.