



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 23, 2021

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Soil Samples Do Not Indicate Actionable Lead Levels after Controlled Burn

Bloomington, Ind. - Soil samples taken from properties where debris was most heavily dispersed after the November 5 controlled burn do not contain levels of lead exceeding Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) limits for residential or direct contact exposure, and are in keeping with IDEM's survey of background lead concentrations in Indiana soil. Samples were collected by VET Environmental Engineering (VET) and tested at an independent laboratory. None of the samples exceeded 200 parts per million (ppm) for lead. IDEM requires action to be taken if lead levels exceed 400 ppm. Once all of the test results have been received, the City plans on releasing a comprehensive written report to include the test results for review.

The environmental remediation consultants advise that residents in the [affected area](#) may rake leaves to the edge of their property for vacuum collection by the City. The City expects results this week from samples taken from leaf piles around the area to ensure the leaves are within normal parameters for disposal at a landfill. In an abundance of caution, the City will not

compost these leaves as per usual practice. Households in the affected area participating in the 1,000 Households Who Mulch initiative (whose homes are designated with a “Proud Pilot Participant” sign) may rake leaves to the curb for collection as well.

“We have consulted with public health officials and based on the current data and work completed, the homeowners should be able to proceed with fall lawn care as they normally would,” said Monroe County Health Administrator Penny Caudill. “Wearing gloves, washing up when the work is done and perhaps wearing a mask should allow the work to be done with little, if any risk.”

If any visible paint flakes are found, they may be disposed of in the normal household trash.

Blood samples collected from firefighters who were operating at the controlled burn were tested for elevated lead levels. Results will be shared with the public when available and testing extended to community members. BFD firefighters are being trained to offer this testing through a continued partnership with the Monroe County Health Department.

VET and Environmental Assurance Company, Inc. (EACI) worked with the City to evaluate and/or remediate a total of 111 properties.

The controlled burn at 1213 South High Street was undertaken as a training exercise for the BFD after being [approved by IDEM](#). This exercise resulted in 94 Bloomington firefighters, many of them hired over the past few years, gaining invaluable experience. Bloomington Fire Chief Jason Moore has been in communication with the director of the Indiana Fire & Public Safety Academy and IDEM officials to ensure that lessons learned from this controlled burn are openly discussed in an effort to inform future approval processes or guidance to the state’s fire departments.

More information about the City’s actions to respond to the effects of the controlled burn is available at bloomington.in.gov/bfdburninfo or by contacting Bloomington Fire Chief Jason Moore at FireChief@bloomington.in.gov.

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