



## FAIRMONT PARK POND- WATER QUALITY INCIDENT

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Where did the mercury come from?**

EPA mercury vapor analysis showed no elevated levels (none above background) of mercury vapors around the park, along the irrigation ditches/creek, along the perimeter of the burnt structure, and along the perimeter of the structure under demolition. Water and sediment samples taken by EPA and Public Utilities also demonstrated there was no mercury contamination.

What we do know is that we received a report of a sheen on the Fairmont Park pond, which triggered testing that detected the potential presence of mercury in the pond.

#### **How long has the mercury been in the pond?**

Confirmation sampling did not show that there was mercury in the pond.

#### **How bad is it/how big is this issue?**

Salt Lake City was notified by the contracted clean-up company that mercury was detected in the tank used to hold material taken from the pond as part of the clean-up of a sheen. Immediately after the City was notified about the presence of mercury, the City chose to close the pond and waterways at Fairmont Park out of an abundance of caution.

The initial sample result indicated a mercury level above regulatory disposal limits, which is different than an assessment of toxicity for humans or animals. Additional testing and analysis as part of the EPA investigation found no mercury contamination.

Salt Lake City requested the EPA's involvement to assess the pond and surrounding area to determine the appropriate short and long-term response. Salt Lake City and EPA are committed to the protection of public health and the environment.

On September 8, at the request of Salt Lake City, the Salt Lake County Health Department conducted air quality monitoring for the presence of mercury and did not find any concerning readings in the air.

On September 9, EPA also conducted air quality monitoring and did not find any concerning readings.

Water and sediment sampling results also confirm there was not mercury contamination.

#### **Are residents in danger?**

There is no indication that residents in the area or park-goers are or were in any danger.

#### **When will testing/sampling start? And when will we see results?**



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#### **Testing is now complete and all results are available.**

On September 8, a water sample from a Salt Lake City contractor hired to remove a sheen on the pond had a positive mercury result. Salt Lake City Department of Public Utilities immediately contacted Salt Lake County Health Department and Utah Division of Environmental Quality and requested assistance.

The City then collected water samples from the pond and outlet of the pond. On September 9, EPA arrived and conducted air monitoring which showed no elevated levels of mercury vapors around the park. On September 10 the City received lab results that also did not detect mercury. Water and Sediment samples collected by EPA also showed no elevated levels of mercury.

#### **What should people do if they have been in the water or worry they are exposed?**

There is no indication of a public health threat. If you are concerned about your health please reach out to your primary care doctor.

#### **Is the whole park closed?**

Fairmont Park remained open, however, the pond and waterways of the park were closed. As of Monday, September 13 the waterways and pond were reopened.

We recommend not consuming fish from the pond until tissue sample analysis is complete. This analysis is being formed out of an abundance of caution.

#### **How long will the pond and waterways be closed?**

As of September 13, the pond and waterways are open.

#### **What is the water in the pond used for? Drinking?**

The pond at Fairmont Park is a spring-fed pond that is used for recreational purposes only. It is not a part of the City's drinking water, and it is not used for irrigation at the park.

#### **What is mercury and how dangerous is it?**

Mercury is a chemical that can be found throughout the Salt Lake Valley and can be used in jewelry making, mining, industrial processes, and batteries. Young children are more susceptible to exposure than adults. The human toxicity of mercury is dependent on several factors, including its chemical form, concentration, and length of exposure.

#### **People nearby have gardens. Will there be mercury in their produce?**

There is no indication of mercury contamination. As with any private garden in the City, proper washing of grown produce is recommended to remove potential substances that may be on the product's surface.



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#### **Are there dead birds/fish?**

In the last month, there have been 4 birds and two fish found dead at the pond.

However, the cause of these deaths remains unknown because during this time of year there can be issues in the area with avian botulism, which would affect birds, and the water oxygen levels are known to be lower in the Fairmont Park Pond, which could affect fish. Salt Lake City is working with the Department of Natural Resources to investigate these issues.

#### **What if I ate fish from the pond?**

If you are concerned about your health please reach out to your primary care doctor.

#### **How is the EPA involved in this?**

The EPA was requested by Salt Lake City to perform an evaluation and necessary remediation of any mercury officially found. EPA has authority pursuant to the federal Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act to take the lead to respond to this situation.

#### **What are we doing to protect the unsheltered?**

We are working with homeless service providers to communicate with unsheltered people in the area.

Please visit- [Response.epa.gov/fairmontpond](https://response.epa.gov/fairmontpond) - *This document was revised on September 14, 2021.*