

Week of May 15, 2023 Update

EPA conducted a preliminary site assessment to determine next steps in the cleanup of the My Way Trading warehouse fire site. EPA collected a 54 soil, debris and asbestos samples from the three properties located in the warehouse fire site area. Twenty-nine asbestos samples and 25 soil/debris samples were collected. The samples will be sent to the lab for analysis. EPA conducted the assessment per the request of the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

Richmond Debris Cleanup Completed

On May 4, 2023, EPA crews completed debris collection at 330 private and public properties in properties have been cleared to resume normal outdoor activities. EPA visually inspected an debris and found no evidence of presumed asbestos-containing material.

On April 19 and 20, EPA activity-based sampling showed no asbestos particles could spread th yardwork activities after debris was removed. At a property where EPA removed debris from tl followed a rigorous two-day process taking air samples as they conducted day-to-day yard activ lawn and using a leaf blower. Sampling results are posted in the [documents section](#) at response.epa.gov/MyWayTradingWarehouse.

May 5, 2023, Site Update

EPA has ended fire debris collection. All owners that signed access agreements to have their properties visibly inspected and debris collected have been contacted. In total, EPA collected debris from 330 private and public properties in Indiana and Ohio. For future questions about the site, please contact the city of Richmond.

In the next few weeks, EPA will conduct additional assessment activities, including sampling fire debris for hazardous materials, at the fire site. The agency will coordinate all future activities with the city.

May 1, 2023, Site Update 2 p.m.

Residential debris collection will end this week. To date, EPA has collected debris from 245 private and public properties in Indiana and Ohio. EPA visibly inspected for debris at an additional 511 locations and found no evidence of presumed asbestos-containing material. To have EPA come to your home to pick up debris, please send a signed access agreement to Rachel at linduska.rachel@epa.gov no later than Wednesday, May 3. The access form is available in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) in our documents section.

April 28, 2023, Site Update 2 p.m.

Residential debris collection continues. EPA anticipates completing all debris collection in the first week of May. To date, EPA has collected debris from 165 private and public properties in Indiana and Ohio. EPA visibly inspected for debris at an additional 438 properties and found no evidence of presumed asbestos-containing material. To have EPA come to your home to pick up debris, please fill out and sign the access agreement in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) in our documents section and email Rachel at linduska.rachel@epa.gov.

All data documents have been posted to the [website](#). The remaining air sample summaries samples are now available.

April 26, 2023, Site Update 2 p.m.

Yesterday, EPA, local and state agencies met with about 120 residents from Indiana and Ohio to answer questions about this response. EPA shared photos, brought in air monitoring and sampling equipment to show what was used at the response and more. An updated [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document was shared and is available on the website.

Residential debris collection continues. To date, EPA has collected debris from 112 private and public properties in Indiana and Ohio. To have EPA come to your home to pick up debris, please fill out and sign the access agreement in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) in our documents section and email Rachel at linduska.rachel@epa.gov.

April 25, 2023, Site Update 12 p.m.

Tonight, EPA will be at the Fairview Elementary School, 60 NW L St, Richmond, Indiana, from 4 – 8 p.m. to answer questions one-on-one with residents from Indiana and Ohio.

Residential debris collection continues. To date, EPA has collected debris from 94 private and public properties in Indiana and Ohio. To have EPA come to your home to pick up debris, please fill out and sign the access agreement in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) in our documents section and email Rachel at linduska.rachel@epa.gov.

EPA received some final, validated air sampling data that is posted to the [website](#). The agency will continue to post data as it becomes available. EPA also posted results in the [documents section](#) from the activity-based sampling that took place April 19 and 20 to ensure no asbestos particles from activities such as mowing and leaf blowing would have the potential to be in the air. At a property where EPA removed debris from the fire, agency contractors took air samples as they mowed the lawn and used a leaf blower. Throughout the rigorous two-day air sampling process, EPA results

showed no asbestos. EPA has determined that once the debris is removed from the yard, it is safe to resume outdoor activities as normal.

April 24, 2023, Site Update 2 p.m.

To date, EPA has collected debris from 60 private and public properties in Indiana and Ohio. EPA completed debris collection at schools, daycares, community centers and parks on the city and county's priority property list. To have EPA come to your home to pick up debris, please fill out and sign the access agreement in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) in our documents section and email Rachel at linduska.rachel@epa.gov.

Tomorrow, EPA will be available to speak to residents one-on-one at the Fairview Elementary School, 60 NW L St, Richmond, Indiana. The agency will answer resident questions about debris collection and air monitoring and sampling. City, county and state officials will also be present to answer questions. Residents from Indiana and Ohio are encouraged to attend.

April 21, 2023, Site Update 2 p.m.

On Tuesday, April 25, from 4 – 8 p.m. at the Fairview Elementary School, 60 NW L St, Richmond, Indiana, local, state and federal agencies will be available to speak with residents one-on-one and answer any questions they may have about the fire, debris collection, air monitoring, health-related and more. Residents from Indiana and Ohio are encouraged to attend.

To date, EPA has collected debris at priority properties identified by the city and county including schools, daycares and parks in Indiana and Ohio. EPA also started collecting debris at residential properties. As of this morning, crews have collected debris at 17 schools, 18 daycares, 1 community center, 8 parks and 7 residential properties. To have EPA come to your home to pick up debris, please fill out and sign the access agreement in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) in our documents section and email Rachel at linduska.rachel@epa.gov.

If you do not have any debris on your property or EPA has removed debris from your yard, it is safe to mow your lawn and conduct other yard activities (e.g. leaf blowing). EPA conducted robust activity-based sampling to ensure no asbestos particles from activities such as mowing and leaf blowing would have the potential to be in the air. At a property where EPA removed debris from the fire, agency contractors took air samples as they mowed the lawn and used a leaf blower. Throughout the rigorous two-day air sampling process, EPA results showed no asbestos. EPA has determined that once the debris is removed from the yard, it is safe to resume outdoor activities as normal.

April 20, 2023, Site Update 12 p.m.

Air Monitoring and Sampling

Yesterday, EPA conducted roving air monitoring at approximately 10 locations in the city of Richmond and set up stationary air monitors around the perimeter of the fire site. EPA has not detected volatile organic compounds or particulate matter emissions for the last three days. After consulting with the city and state, EPA ceased air monitoring and sampling around the site at 10 p.m.

Debris Collection

To date, EPA has collected debris at priority properties identified by the city and county including schools, daycares and parks in Indiana and Ohio. As of this morning, crews have collected debris at 17 schools, 16 daycares, 1 community center and 6 parks. EPA will soon begin debris collection at residential properties. To have EPA come to your home to pick up debris, please fill out the access agreement in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) in our documents section and email Rachel at linduska.rachel@epa.gov.

April 19, 2023, Site Update 12 p.m.

Air Monitoring and Sampling

Yesterday afternoon, the Richmond fire chief declared the fire officially out. Air monitoring and sampling results have shown low to non-detect levels of particulate matter. Based on these results, EPA consulted with Ohio EPA and discontinued the stationary air monitoring station in New Paris, Ohio. EPA discontinued overnight roving air monitoring around the city of Richmond but continued stationary air monitoring around the perimeter of the site at four locations. Today, roving air monitoring will take place at 20 locations around the city of Richmond. Overnight, EPA conducted air sampling in Indiana and will post results when available.

Debris Collection

To date, EPA has collected debris at priority properties identified by the city and county including schools, daycares and parks in Indiana and Ohio. As of this morning, crews have collected debris at 16 schools, 10 daycares, 1 community center and 2 parks. EPA will soon begin debris collection at residential properties. To have EPA come to your home to pick up debris, please fill out the access agreement in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) in our documents section and email Rachel at linduska.rachel@epa.gov.

April 18, 2023, Site Update 2 p.m.

Air Monitoring and Sampling

The fire continues to smolder. Yesterday and overnight, EPA did not detect contaminants of concern. EPA has reduced the number of air monitors and air sampling equipment in the community. EPA continues 24-hour air monitoring.

EPA posted additional maps of air monitoring locations as well as air monitoring summary results to the website under the [documents section](#). EPA will post final, validated air sample results when available. Air sampling involves collection of air for laboratory analysis. The purpose of air sampling is to measure how much of a specific contaminant is present in the air over a period of time. The quality assurance/quality control process may take weeks to finalize.

Resident Questions

EPA posted a [Frequently Asked Questions](#) document to our website to address resident questions. The agency will continue to update this document as the response continues. [Wayne County Emergency Management Agency](#) and the [city of Richmond](#) also have additional information on their respective websites.

Debris Collection

Testing confirmed that some of the debris from the fire contained asbestos. EPA is offering to safely remove debris from all yards and outdoor areas. EPA contractors are searching for debris from the fire, flagging what they find, and removing it. OSHA standards for workers state that EPA and its contractors must first evaluate the potential for worker exposure prior to downgrading protective gear. EPA received sample results that showed crews could downgrade protective gear to gloves and use tongs while picking up debris. The crews place flags next to any debris they find to mark their location and will remove the flags as debris are collected. As a precautionary measure, EPA will collect all debris identified at the property.

EPA is offering free debris collection. To have EPA come to your home to pick up debris, please fill out the access agreement in [English](#) or [Spanish](#) in our documents section and email Rachel at linduska.rachel@epa.gov.

EPA recommends residents should not disturb debris that may have come from the My Way Trading warehouse fire. Debris may contain asbestos; disturbing debris may lead to asbestos exposure. EPA is coordinating with local officials to prioritize areas where debris will be collected including schools and daycares, public parks and residences in Indiana and Ohio.

EPA may begin using unmanned aircraft systems, or drones, to help conduct roof inspections for potentially asbestos-containing debris. This will allow EPA crews to identify whether debris needs to be collected from roofs of buildings and/or homes.

Use of UAS would be safer for crews, and potentially eliminate any need to physically go on a roof for an inspection. EPA will inform property owners before a drone is used and will have them sign an access agreement.

April 17, 2023, Site Update 12 p.m.

Air monitoring

EPA is conducting 24-hour air monitoring until the Richmond Fire Department declares the fire is out due to the potential for flare ups at the site. For all contaminants, overnight air monitoring results were non-detectable levels except for particulate matter. Particulate levels were in the “good” range according to the [Air Quality Index](#). Air sample results for volatile organic compounds were mostly non-detectable levels with one low level detection for benzene just north of the fire site. EPA posted roving air monitoring data to the website and will post final, validated air sample results when available.

Yesterday, Wayne County Emergency Management Agency made the decision to lift the evacuation order in the half-mile radius surrounding the site. EPA’s air monitoring data and preliminary air sampling data taken at the site and in the surrounding communities was provided to the EMA and to the Wayne County Health Department. EPA’s data sharing agreement with local, state and federal responding agencies allows the agency to share preliminary data with these entities. Final data will be made public after the quality assurance/quality controlled process.

Debris Collection

Beginning Saturday, April 14, EPA prioritized debris collection at schools, daycares and city parks in Indiana and Ohio that continues today. Crews are searching for debris from the fire, flagging what they find, and removing it while following OSHA standards for workers, which state that EPA and its contractors must first evaluate the potential for worker exposure prior to downgrading protective gear. As EPA waits for sample results to come back from the lab, crews will continue to wear protective gear while collecting debris. A reminder to residents – please leave any debris alone — do not touch debris or mow over it until EPA crews come to your residence.

April 16, 2023, Site Update 6 p.m.

At 4 p.m. today, Wayne County Emergency Management Agency made the decision to lift the evacuation order for residents living in the half-mile radius surrounding the site, as well as the shelter-in-place order. EPA continues to conduct 24-hour air

monitoring and sampling until the Richmond Fire Department declares the fire is out since the potential for flare ups at the site may still occur.

EPA continues to provide air monitoring and sampling data results to the Wayne County EMA and Wayne County Health Department. EPA air sampling results from Friday evening detected volatile organic compounds in some samples consistent with previous reports. Air sampling results from Saturday evening confirm an expected decline of VOCs, as expected as the fire continues to go down. EPA air monitoring overnight and today has shown particulate matter in the evacuation zone and in the community, as expected from smoldering and flare ups. Future data will continue to be shared with local, state and federal officials. EPA is posting air monitoring results to the website under the [documents section](#). Once the agency receives final, validated air sample results, EPA will post them to the website as well.

Debris Collection

EPA prioritized collection of debris at schools, daycares and city parks in Indiana and Ohio today that will continue tomorrow. Crews are searching for debris from the fire, flagging what they find, and removing it while following OSHA standards for workers, which state that EPA and its contractors must first evaluate the potential for worker exposure prior to downgrading protective gear. As EPA waits for sample results to come back from the lab, crews today wore protective gear while collecting debris.

April 16, 2023, Site Update 11 a.m.

EPA continues 24-hour air monitoring and sampling. Friday night, EPA detected benzene in the evacuation zone after flare ups from the smoldering fire. The fire continued to smolder overnight with two flare ups. Also overnight, bonfires lit at homes around the city may interfere with air monitoring readings.

EPA will continue to collect debris at schools, daycares and city parks today. EPA is also working with local and state officials to finalize a plan to collect debris from homes in the surrounding communities

A fact sheet has been posted in [English](#) and [Spanish](#) about debris collection on our website under the documents section. These will also be handed out in the community.

April 15, 2023, Site Update 7 p.m.

This morning, EPA crews began collecting debris at schools near the Richmond fire site, including three schools in Richmond and one in Ohio. Crews are searching for debris from the fire, flagging what they find and removing it. Some residents may have

seen crews in protective gear. Per OSHA standards, EPA must evaluate the potential for exposure first. Once exposure levels are demonstrated to be safe, protective gear will be downgraded. EPA is also working with local and state officials on a plan to collect debris from homes in the surrounding communities.

EPA continues 24-hour air monitoring and sampling. The agency is sharing data with health agencies and local and state entities to help inform their decision whether to lift the evacuation order. No determination has been made at this time.

April 15, 2023, Site Update 9 a.m.

Debris Collection

This morning, EPA crews will begin to collect debris at schools in Richmond and Ohio. EPA is working with local and state agencies to develop a debris collection plan in the surrounding communities and will provide information to residents to schedule debris pick up at their homes. Since the debris may have asbestos-containing materials, EPA reminds residents to continue to leave any debris alone —please do not touch debris or mow over it – until EPA crews come to your residence.

Air Monitoring

EPA continued downwind mobile air monitoring at several locations including at the hospital and several long-term care facilities. Due to the predicted cooler temperatures and light and variable winds, additional mobile air monitoring points were added around the perimeter to accommodate any potential wind shift.

EPA continues mobile air monitoring for products of combustion expected from a plastics fire. Overnight air monitoring **around the community** did identify particulate matter, as expected from the smoldering fire. None of the additional analytes were detected around the community. From the **evacuation zone**, air monitoring detected particulate matter. Air monitoring did not detect any additional analytes from the evacuation zone area.

Water Sampling

The city of Richmond and the Indiana Department of Environmental Management are leading efforts to sample surface and municipal water.

Fire Update

The Richmond Fire Department remains in the lead to address hot spots and flare-ups at the warehouse. Yesterday, the Richmond Fire Department informed EPA that PFAS-free foam was used to suppress the remaining hot spots at the warehouse. The city of Richmond and IDEM are in the lead for managing runoff from the scene.

April 14, 2023, Site Update 9 p.m.

What's the difference between air monitoring and air sampling?

The goal of **air monitoring** at the fire site is to quickly detect contaminants in the air so that actions can be taken to protect the safety of the first responders. Air monitoring uses electronic devices to measure concentrations of contaminants. These devices can be set up quickly and collect real-time air data. These data are used to guide actions in the field by indicating the location of the chemicals in the air which may be of concern. Stationary (not moving) and mobile (moving or roving) air monitors provide continuous real-time data of air contamination to inform when concentrations rise above thresholds.

Air sampling involves collection of air for laboratory analysis. The purpose of air sampling is to measure how much of a specific contaminant is present in the air over a period of time. For this response, samples are collected over 24-hours and are submitted to a laboratory for analysis.

The agency has used the following air monitoring and sampling instruments:

- Single Point Monitors
- MultiRAE Pro
- TVA 2020
- Handheld DustTrak

EPA has posted air monitoring data summary tables in our documents section. As EPA continues to receive data, we will post it to our website. Our goal is to get information out to the public as soon quickly as possible. To date, EPA has conducted roving air monitoring at 51 locations, taking a total of 1,169 measurements. EPA will continue 24-hour air monitoring and sampling.

EPA anticipates as early as tomorrow the agency will begin to collect debris in priority areas including schools and public parks. Since the debris may have asbestos-containing materials, EPA reminds residents to continue to leave any debris alone — please do not touch debris or mow over it. EPA is working with local and state agencies to develop a debris collection plan in the surrounding communities.

April 14, 2023, Site Update 9 a.m.

EPA continues 24-hour air monitoring and sampling at the site and around the community. The fire department is addressing hot spots and flare ups, the fire is not extinguished.

Beginning yesterday evening, cooler temperatures and fire resulted in ground level smoke. At the response command post, located around the center of the evacuation zone, EPA air monitors detected hydrogen cyanide, benzene, chlorine, carbon monoxide and volatile organic compounds. Immediately following the detections of HCN and benzene, EPA alerted the fire department so they may take worker safety precautions.

Overnight, EPA collected 9 mobile air monitoring points from around the community. EPA also operated 9 stationary particulate meters inside and outside the evacuation zone. EPA detected particulate matter, as expected from a fire. Despite the detections of compounds at the command post, which is located at the center of the evacuation zone, none of the additional analytes were detected outside of the evacuation zone in the community.

EPA collected 6 air samples for volatile organic compounds. Air samples for this period were 24-hour samples. Air sample locations were co-located with the stationary particulate meters. Samples will be submitted for laboratory analysis and results will be reported early next week. Results will be shared with public health partners for context and posted to the EPA website.

Yesterday, EPA received air sample results from the on-site smoke plume during initial fire operations. Several volatile organic compounds were detected but all were VOCs EPA would expect within smoke from a plastics fire.

EPA [posted a map](#) of the roving air monitoring locations from 1 a.m. April 12 – 5 p.m. April 13. The map can be found under our documents section. EPA will continue to post air monitoring and sampling location maps and will post results when available.

April 13, 2023, Site Update 3 p.m.

This afternoon, debris sample results confirmed the presence of asbestos-containing material. EPA is working with local and state officials to develop a plan to address debris found in the surrounding neighborhoods. Asbestos-containing materials may release fibers when they are disturbed. Residents should continue to leave any debris alone —please do not touch debris or mow over it.

IDEM issued Air Quality Action Days through Friday, April 14, in Wayne and Randolph counties. IDEM is forecasting elevated levels of particulate matter in the air due to smoke from the fire.

EPA has conducted roving air monitoring at 34 locations, taking a total of 721 measurements. Ground-level air monitors continues to detect particulate matter, as expected from a fire.

EPA has received one air sample result, taken in real-time at the location of the fire on April 12. The result shows volatile organic compounds present. This result is representative of what firefighters might be exposed to and not what the broader community would have been exposed to. EPA conducted 24-hour air sampling on Wednesday, April 12 at the local hospital and anticipates those results in the next couple days. Those results will be more representative as to what the broader community could have been exposed to during that time. The half-mile evacuation order remains in effect and EPA will continue to provide all air monitoring and sampling data to the local and state officials including health agencies to help inform their decision-making.

April 13, 2023, Site Update 11 a.m.

Overnight, EPA continued air monitoring and sampling in the city of Richmond. EPA is also monitoring air near New Paris, Ohio. Mobile air monitoring locations were chosen based on wind direction. Yesterday, wind direction was coming from the southwest traveling north/northeast. Cooler temperatures and a cooler fire overnight caused more ground level smoke. Wind direction also changed overnight traveling north/northwest. Air monitoring at ground level continues to detect particulate matter, as expected from a fire.

The city of Richmond and IDEM are in the lead for managing water runoff from the scene. The city is collecting surface water samples at the Middle Fork East Fork Whitewater River and will share results with EPA.

EPA is waiting for debris sample results to determine whether asbestos-containing materials may have left the site. EPA reminds residents to leave any debris alone and not touch it until EPA sample results are back. Do not mow over the debris. Once officials determine the nature of debris, new information will be shared as soon as it's available.

April 12, 2023, Site Update 9 p.m.

The fire continues to burn, and the half mile evacuation order is still in effect. EPA continues to conduct 24-hour air monitoring and sampling in the community. At this time, Ohio EPA has requested EPA support for particulate air monitoring in Ohio.

EPA is collecting debris samples from the fire. Initial sample results should be available tomorrow morning. EPA is evaluating school grounds for any potential fire

debris. If debris is found will sample for asbestos. Asbestos-containing materials may be present due to the age of the building. EPA reminds residents to leave any debris alone and not touch it until EPA sample results are back. Do not mow over the debris. Once officials determine the nature of debris, new information will be shared.

April 12, 2023, Site Update 12 p.m.

EPA's air monitoring has detected particulate matter, as expected during a fire. The agency is also monitoring the air for products of combustion expected from a plastics fire including:

- particulates
- carbon monoxide
- volatile organic compounds
- benzene
- chlorine
- hydrogen cyanide
- mineral acids (H₂SO₄ and HCl)

EPA will continue 24-hour air monitoring at the response. Monitoring takes place at the ground level. During the fire, smoke rises with the heat. Once the fire cools down, EPA anticipates seeing more smoke at ground level.

EPA has also started air sampling at different locations in the community. Sample results are anticipated in the next days or weeks, depending on laboratory analysis.

The agency started collecting debris samples in the surrounding community to determine whether asbestos-containing materials may have left the site. Asbestos-containing materials may be present due to the age of the building. EPA reminds residents to leave any debris alone and not touch it until EPA sample results are back. Do not mow over the debris. Once officials determine the nature of debris, new information will be shared.

Five on-scene coordinators from EPA are on site to assist with the response at the request of the Richmond Fire Department and Indiana Department of Environmental Management. EPA continues to work closely with local and state responders that include: Richmond Fire Department, several local fire departments, Wayne County Emergency Management Agency, IDEM, Indiana State Fire Marshall, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, Indiana State Police and Wayne County Health Department.

April 12, 2023, Site Update 9 a.m.

Overnight, EPA began air monitoring around the site at 15 mobile monitoring locations. EPA continues to assist local and state agencies responding to the fire at the My Way trading warehouse. The fire department remains the lead agency for the response. Today, in addition to air monitoring, EPA will collect debris samples in the surrounding community to determine whether asbestos-containing materials may have left the site. Residents are asked to leave any debris alone and not touch it until EPA sample results are back. Do not mow over the debris. Once officials determine the nature of debris, new information will be shared.

The fire department said the fire is under control but continues to actively burn or smolder. At this point, the fire department is trying to contain the fire and anticipates the fire will continue to burn for several days.

Background

On Tuesday, April 11, around 2:30 p.m. EDT, two warehouses containing large amount of chipped, shredded and bulk recycled plastic caught fire in Richmond, Indiana. The fire department is currently the lead agency for the response. The Indiana Department of Emergency Management requested EPA assistance and EPA was on site by 8 p.m. That evening, EPA, in consultation with the responding local and state partners, established mobile air monitoring locations at the site and in the community.