



Dear Resident,

The Department of General Services (DGS) takes the safety and wellbeing of District playground users very seriously. Earlier this year DGS received claims from a community group that District playgrounds contained elevated levels of lead as a result of the poured-in-place (PIP) material used as ground surface at some sites. In response DGS, in partnership with DC Public Schools (DCPS), contracted with a third-party certified industrial hygienist (CIH), SaLUT, Inc., to test nearly 320 PIP surfaces at 87 school sites. These tests included up to 48 samples taken at each school (four sets of 12 samples per school), four different types of tests, a documented sampling and testing protocol, and a certified independent lab to run the analysis.

These tests found no consistent pattern of actionable lead levels across PIP playground sites analyzed, with the majority falling below such levels. Where results came out above actionable levels, sites were closed as needed to carry out remediation relevant to the identified lead source.

Methodology, results, and recommendations from these tests can be found in the report produced by SaLUT – [\*Summary of Current Lead Testing Results of DCPS PIP Playgrounds\*](#). Of the 320 surfaces at 87 sites tested, the CIH found actionable levels of lead on 17 playgrounds. For the purposes of this study “actionable” meant either above 400 parts per million (ppm) – per Environmental Protection Agency Standards for bare soil play areas – for three of the four tests, or 10 micrograms on the wipe test, which was identified by the CIH as the highest potential indicator of direct lead exposure.

The District carried out lead remediation on all 17 sites. This included pressure washing and high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) vacuuming of 14 of the 17 sites. DGS, out of an abundance of caution, also HEPA vacuumed all 87 DCPS sites with PIP playgrounds to ensure surfaces were clear of debris before the start of the school year. For six sites prolonged playground closure, meaning longer than needed to conduct pressure washing and vacuuming, and more extensive remediation were required, including stabilizing nearby paint flaking and covering or removing sections of material.

Where these elevated levels of lead were found, further testing identified a variety of sources depending on the site, ranging from paints and pigments to the migration of dust from bare soil and construction. DGS continues to monitor these sites to ensure sustained effectiveness of remediation.

DGS briefed DCPS, the Department of Energy and Environment (DOEE), the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), District health officials, and the Office of the City Administrator (OCA) on these findings and the recommendations of the CIH in order to formulate next steps for the District. As a result of this briefing and subsequent discussion, moving forward DGS and its District partners will:

- Use lessons learned from this study to better target sites at risk of lead contamination across all District playgrounds, including DPR sites.
- Implement an improved routine maintenance schedule in order to help keep play surfaces clear of particulate and debris.



- Revise playground design and purchasing guidelines to more explicitly guard against lead contamination from various sources.
- Provide [informational materials produced by DOEE](#) to educate school staff, recreational facility managers, and the general public on best practices for reducing the risk of exposure to lead in the environment.

We take seriously any concern for safety at District facilities and will continue to use sound, scientific methods to assess risks to reinforce that safety. Any additional materials related to this topic will be posted to the [DGS website](#) and provided to our agency partners to share with community members and stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Keith A. Anderson  
Director, Department of General Services (DGS)

Dr. Lewis D. Ferebee  
Chancellor of DC Public Schools (DCPS)

Delano Hunter  
Director, Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR)

Tommy Wells  
Director, Energy and Environment (DOEE)