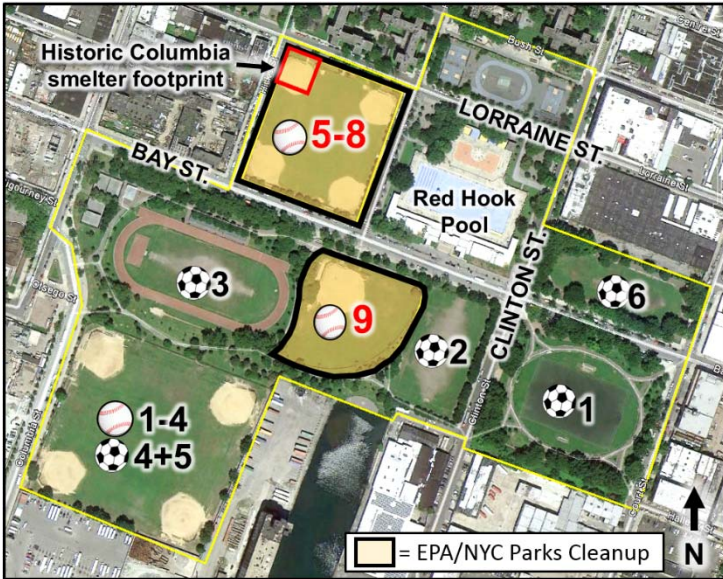




# Announcement of Revised Schedule for Cleanup Activities at Red Hook Ball Fields 5-8

Community Update No. 7

Spring 2018



Red Hook Park Ball Fields to be cleaned up by NYC Parks under EPA oversight.

## UPDATE ON THE CLEANUP OF BALL FIELDS 5-8 AND 9

The New York City Department of Parks and Recreation (NYC Parks) will be cleaning up Red Hook Park Ball Fields 5-8 and 9, under U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) oversight due to lead contamination from a historic secondary lead smelting facility known as the Columbia Smelting and Refining Works (Columbia) facility.

The cleanup of Ball Fields 5-8 was previously planned to be completed by fall 2019, but will be delayed until the fall of 2020 due to unexpected additional requirements in NYC Parks' process for hiring a construction contractor. In the meantime, these fields remain closed because elevated lead levels are present on the surface of these fields, where it is most accessible. Ball Field 9 remains open because the lead contamination in this field is below the surface and is not as easily accessible. Ball Field 9 will then be cleaned up between 2020 and 2021.

Because of the large size and complex nature of this engineering and construction project, it will take several years to finish. Because of the delay in the cleanup of Ball Fields 5-8, construction could overlap between Ball Fields 5-8 and Ball Field 9 in 2020. During that time, all ball fields will potentially be closed to the public.

## WHY DO THE BALL FIELDS NEED TO BE CLEANED UP?

As part of an investigation of the former Columbia smelting plant, the EPA sampled soil from the city block where it once stood, as well as other areas of Red Hook Park. Results of the sampling showed lead in surface soils from the former Columbia facility at elevated levels across Ball Fields 5, 6, 7 and 8. As a result, Ball Fields 5-8 were closed in spring of 2015 and will remain closed until the cleanup is completed.

At Ball Field 9, elevated levels of lead were found only in deeper soil samples. Ball Field 9 will remain open for public use until cleanup begins.

### WHAT IS SECONDARY LEAD SMELTING?

Secondary lead smelting plants refine scrap or used lead materials into metallic lead of a higher purity. Such materials can include the lead plates from batteries, lead pipe or metal sheets that contain lead.

Secondary smelting can be responsible for releasing lead into the surrounding environment through lead fume emissions. Lead dust and smoke can be released through the smelting process, and slag contaminated with lead may be left over after the smelting process.

### WHY IS LEAD A PROBLEM?

Lead is a toxic metal that was used for many years in paint and leaded gasoline. Lead poisoning can cause a number of harmful health effects, particularly in children under the age of six.

Exposure to lead in soil can occur when children play in the dirt and put their hands or dusty toys in their mouths. Lead can also get into your body by breathing or swallowing lead dust, or by eating soil containing lead.

### PUBLIC MEETING:

April 30, 2018 at 6 PM  
Red Hook Recreation Center  
155 Bay St., Brooklyn, NY 11231

**If you would like information about the site please contact:**

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Community Involvement  
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**If you would like information on other environmental concerns or the Superfund hazardous waste program contact:**

George Zachos  
U.S. EPA  
Regional Public Liaison  
(732) 321-6621  
Toll Free: (888) 283-7626  
[zachos.george@epa.gov](mailto:zachos.george@epa.gov)

**Visit the EPA's website at:**

<https://www.epa.gov/ny/columbia-smelting-refining-works-red-hook-brooklyn-new-york>

## CLEANUP PLANS

Under EPA oversight, the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation will remove all park features such as fencing, most of the trees, curbing and other structures, place a barrier on top of contaminated soil, and cover the barrier with one foot of clean soil and natural or artificial turf over the entire area. A bioswale (planted areas along the fields that collect stormwater that runs off the fields when it rains), new trees and other improvements will be added. The baseball diamonds, grass cover, fencing, walkways, and associated structures will then be reinstalled. Steps will be taken to make sure the public is not exposed to contaminants during construction. The cleanup actions will permanently eliminate the chance of people coming into contact with lead contaminated soil on these fields. The barrier and cover will be inspected regularly.

Details on all of the steps involved in the cleanup process can be found on EPA's webpage for the project (see link below). All work on these fields is being done under a Consent Order between EPA and NYC Parks, a legal document about the cleanup finalized in 2016. Please visit NYC Parks' website for information about plans for other fields in Red Hook Park: <https://www.nycgovparks.org/about/whats-happening/red-hook-park-remediation>.

## HOW WILL I GET UPDATES?

EPA and NYC Parks will provide updates on the status of the Ball Field 5-9 cleanup efforts to the community in various ways, including fact sheets, letters to park users, updates to the websites and public information sessions where EPA and NYC Parks will be available to present plans and answer questions. If you would like to receive updates for Ball Fields 5 through 9 directly via mail or email, please contact Natalie Loney at (212) 637-3639 or [loney.natalie@epa.gov](mailto:loney.natalie@epa.gov). EPA has established an Information Repository at the Red Hook Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library, where the public can review and copy records related to EPA's investigation and the cleanup of Ball Fields 5 through 9.

## SIMPLE PRECAUTIONARY STEPS TO REDUCE YOUR LEAD EXPOSURE

The following steps are recommended to reduce your potential exposure to lead contamination that may be present in urban soils.

- Remove shoes at the door before entering your home to prevent tracking in any dirt that may be on your shoes. Clean the bottom of your shoes with a wet wipe or paper towel.
- Wash your hands and face after visiting these ball fields and always before eating, drinking, or smoking.
- Avoid digging into or disturbing soil below the surface of the fields.