



Environmental Protection  
Omaha, NE - Omaha Lead Site

December 10, 2003

Mr. Don Bahnke  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Region VII  
Superfund Division  
901 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street  
Kansas City, KS 66101

**Subject:** Comments on the EPA's Demographic and Land Use Survey

Dear Mr. Bahnke:

Union Pacific Railroad Company appreciates the opportunity to review EPA's "Demographic and Land Use Survey, Omaha Superfund Site, Omaha, Nebraska", dated August 2003. The comments presented in the attachment to this letter are based on the experience of our consultant, MFG, conducting similar demographic surveys at other lead and arsenic residential sites. Please include this letter and the attached comments on the demographic survey in the Administrative Record. If you have any questions regarding the attached comments, please contact me at (402) 271-3675.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jeffrey D. McDermott".

Jeffrey D. McDermott, P.E.  
Mgr. Environmental Site Remediation

ENC

Environmental Management Group

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**Mr. Don Bahnke**

**Environmental Protection Agency**

**December 9, 2003**

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C: Cheryl Weston - LSO  
Todd Davis - NDEQ  
Adi Pour - Douglas County  
Sue Dempsey - NHHS  
Mark Doolan - EPA  
Chris Rodgers - City of Omaha  
Tonia Cook - Governor's Task Force  
Brenda Council - Polk Waldman Wickham & Council  
David P. Young - UPPR  
Carolyn McIntosh - Patton Boggs  
Steve Werner - MFG  
Connie Determan - MFG

**COMMENTS ON EPA'S AUGUST 2003  
DRAFT #2 "DEMOGRAPHIC AND LAND USE SURVEY, OMAHA SUPERFUND SITE,  
OMAHA, NEBRASKA"**

**GENERAL**

- The layout is not conducive to families with multiple children under six. The tables will either need to be adjusted to fit responses for multiple children, or multiple copies of tables and questions will need to be provided (one per child).
- It may be helpful to add more explanations regarding the importance of the questions asked. This could help to make the respondents feel more at ease when answering sensitive questions.
- Additional questions should be added about cleaning habits (e.g. how often the house is cleaned, how often the child washes his/her hands, etc.)
- Additional questions should be added about travel (e.g. how often is the child outside of Omaha, how often is the child outside of the U.S., etc.)
- A question should be asked to inquire if a child spends a significant amount of time at a relative or babysitter's house (e.g. if a child spends weekends at a divorced parent's house or grandparent's house).
- The survey should also be prepared in Spanish, and the surveyor will need to be prepared to speak in Spanish.

**PAGE 1**

*Top of Page*

- Add space for resident's address. This information is needed in order to correlate the lead analysis data to the residence.

*"How many individuals live in this home"*

- May be a sensitive question.

*Age, Gender, and Ethic Background Table*

- What is the purpose of inquiring the age of the respondent and spouse/partner?

*Race/Ethnicity*

- Specify that this information is being requested for demographic purposes only.

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*"Where is your child's outdoor primary play area (check one)"*

- Add an addition choice: other (please list).

### *Outdoor Home Activity Table*

- In reference to, “Please describe the nature of your child’s (0-6 only)”: This is not a complete sentence.
- In reference to, “Identify primary types of activities close (1-2 feet) to the house”: What is the significance of 1-2 feet from the house? Perhaps this should be changed to identify activities occurring within the drip zone.
- The survey should include a question about outdoor activities outside of the home or daycare. For example, if a child spend time at a park or playground on a regular basis.
- The survey should also include questions about indoor home activities.

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*“How many hours per week does your child spend at the DAY-CARE, both indoors and outdoors?”*

- Delete “both indoors and outdoors”.
- Daycares should answer this question. Most parents probably do not know.

*“If the child does not play outdoors at the day-care, skip to question xx.”*

- Add a sentence just before this sentence: Does the child play outdoors at the day-care?

### *Outdoor DAY-CARE Table*

- Most parents will not know this information. Again, consult the day-care.

### **PAGE 6**

#### *School Table Heading*

- In reference to, “How many hours per week does your child spend at PRE-SCHOOL, both indoors and outdoors”: “PRE-SCHOOL” should be changed to “SCHOOL”.

### **PAGE 8**

#### *Foods Table*

- In reference to, “Take any Mexican home remedies such as Greta”: Add “or Arzcon”.
- Delete “Mexican home remedies such as Arzcon”.
- In reference to, “Any other home remedies or herbal treatments”: This question may pose a problem because many extraneous responses, such as Echinacea or other new age treatments, will be given.
- In regards to, “Eat foods from any pottery or ceramic-ware made in Mexico”: Change “Mexico” to “a foreign country or on antique china”.

- It may be helpful to include a question regarding the child's diet. Studies suggest that diet (i.e. vitamin intake) affects blood lead levels.

*"Has your child been tested for lead before" Table*

- Asking about the child's type of insurance is a very sensitive topic.

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*Activities/Hobbies Table*

- "Foods" should be changed to "Activities".
- In regards to, "Painting; artistic or industrial": Responses will include paints that are not of concern, such as acrylics. Very few artists' paints contain lead. Responses will also include everyone who paints their home on the weekend. The main concern that needs to be addressed is big remodeling projects and professionals.
- Add "Plumbing" to the table.

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*Occupational Questions*

- In regards to, "What is your occupation": Please explain why this information is needed to the homeowner.
- In regards to, "Do you have lead exposure in your occupation": This is a poorly written question. Perhaps inquire if the respondent is aware of any exposure to lead at their occupation, or ask if the respondent works with lead or lead-containing materials.
- Why is the amount of time spent at work asked for twice? ("Approximately, how many hours per week do you work?" and "If yes, how many hours per year do you volunteer or work outside the home?")
- A question should be added to inquire about vinyl mini blinds, which may be a source of lead exposure.
- A question should be added to inquire about the age of pipes, which may be a source of lead exposure via drinking water.
- A question should be added to inquire about the smoking habits of adults in the household and the child's regular exposure to secondhand smoke.
- In regards to, "If less than one year, did you previously live East of 45<sup>th</sup> St or West": An option should be added for those who previously lived outside of Omaha. If this is the case, the survey should inquire where the respondent previously lived. Also, many people have difficulty with cardinal directions. It may be helpful to add space to record an address or intersection if the respondent does not know if they lived east or west of 45<sup>th</sup> Street.

