

NEWS RELEASE issued by THEC

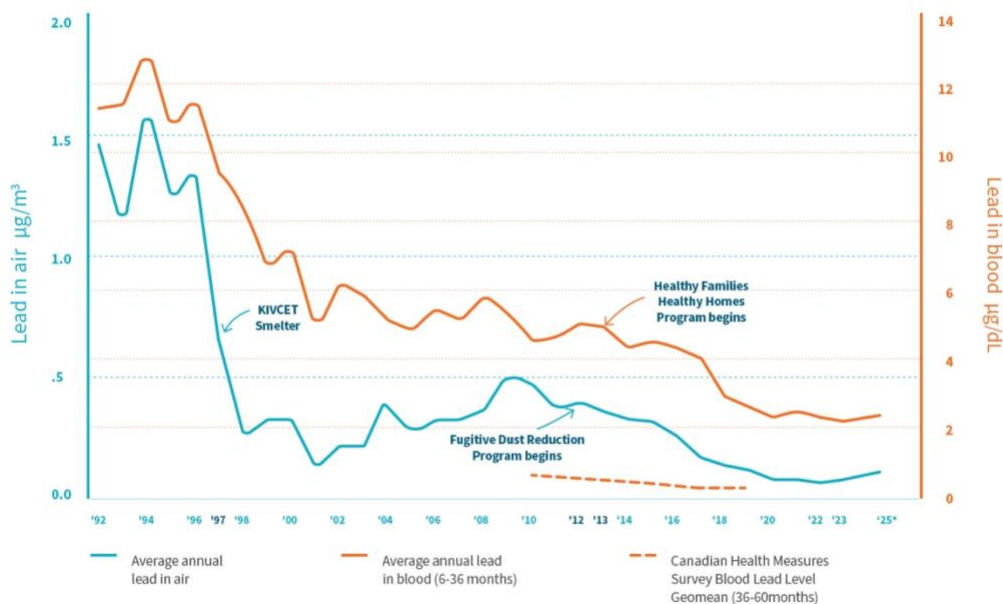
2025 Children's Blood Lead Levels Remain Similar to Recent Years.
Participation Rates Rising

December 5, 2025

Trail, BC - The 2025 blood lead testing clinic results for children aged six months to 36 months in Trail and Rivervale show an average blood lead level of **2.3 micrograms per decilitre**, similar to recent years. Year to year variability in blood lead levels is influenced by lead levels in community air, weather conditions, the group of children tested and where they live.

The long-term downward trend continues to highlight the community's progress in managing lead exposure in an area with an operating lead smelter. Thanks to ongoing testing, prevention, and collaboration, children's blood lead levels in Trail have declined dramatically over time. THEP partners are committed to working together to further reduce children's blood lead levels and decrease the gap in levels between children in Trail and other Canadian children of similar age.

Annual average for lead in community air and children's blood
 (1992-2025*, Trail, B.C.)



*NOTE: Lead in air values for 2025 are currently showing year-to-date, not the complete year.

Dr. Karin Goodison, Medical Health Officer, Interior Health says, “It is encouraging to see that blood lead levels for children in the Trail area remain similar to last year and that community participation is increasing. The collaborative and family-centered approach is key to continuing to drive the blood lead levels lower.”

Monitoring blood lead levels is more than numbers. Every blood lead test helps THEP understand how to better support local families. Tests also help demonstrate where progress has been made, and where attention is still needed. The Trail Area Health & Environment Committee (THEC) extends its gratitude to all the families who participated in the clinics and contribute to the program’s success.

Blood lead testing within the Health Program connects closely to all areas of THEP’s work. A holistic approach underpins everything.

- **Air Quality Improvements** reduce emissions at the source.
- **Soil Management** ensures yards and gardens are safe.
- **Healthy Families Healthy Homes Support** helps families understand and reduce exposure in their home environment.
- **Community Education and Connections** keep everyone informed and engaged.

Air Quality

THEP’s Air Quality Program, delivered by Teck Trail Operations, remains focused on reducing site emissions to reduce lead in dust in the community. Air Quality improvements over three decades have been a key driver for reducing blood lead levels among children and further improvement opportunities continue to be identified and implemented through Teck’s Fugitive Dust Reduction Program. The 2025 year-to-date average is 0.11 micrograms per cubic metre at Butler Park which is higher than recent years influenced by a return to more consistent production following significant investments in the KIVCET furnace in recent years. Levels of lead in community air continue to meet the US Environmental Protection Agency standard (used in the absence of Canadian air quality objectives or standards).

Matt Parrilla, General Manager at Teck Trail Operations says, “Teck Trail Operations is committed to working with all THEP partners to achieve the Medical Health Officer’s recommendation to reduce children’s lead exposure. We have a proven track record of identifying and implementing controls that reduce lead in our community. In 2025, capital investments to reduce fugitive dust along with renewed employee awareness have positioned us to regain momentum on decreasing trends in lead in community air.”

Leading the Way

The Trail community’s leadership and longstanding commitment to a healthy and thriving community has led to internationally recognized results. The community-industry-government partnership is a model for collaborative action. Other countries with operating lead smelters are learning from Trail as an example. Together, we know from evidence that a healthy community depends on collaboration and a holistic approach.

“I want to express my sincere appreciation to all the families who participated in this year’s blood lead testing clinics. Your participation strengthens this long-standing program and ensures we remain focused on safeguarding the health of our children. The City of Trail is proud to be a partner of THEP for over three decades, working together to ensure the health and wellbeing of our community”, says Mayor Colleen Jones, City of Trail, and Chair of the Trail Area Health & Environment Committee.

About the Trail Area Health & Environment Program (THEP)

THEP supports the community of Trail and nearby areas to live, work and play in an area influenced by smelter air emissions. Since the 1890s Trail has been home to one of the world’s largest lead and zinc smelting and refining facilities. For more than 30 years, a group of partners—the City of Trail, Teck Trail, B.C. Ministry of Environment and Parks, and Interior Health—in collaboration with the community, has worked together to continually improve the health and wellbeing of people living near the smelter. THEP focuses on air, soil, health, built environments (homes and other structures), community connection, and understanding the interrelationships between these focus areas. THEP addresses the inherent overlap of different ways people are exposed to lead and maximizes opportunities for improving health and the environment through an integrated approach. Each year, THEP supports hundreds of people in the community with outreach, activities and supplies.

The Trail Area Health & Environment Committee (THEC) is a select committee of Trail City Council and includes local government, the community, industry, provincial and local partners. It was established in 2001 by the Trail Lead Task Force which had conducted research on the issues for 10 years prior. Its mandate is to be a transparent platform for multistakeholder dialogue, collective decision-making and community engagement specific to THEP. A full description is available [online](#).

Over the past three decades children’s blood lead levels in Trail have declined and air quality has improved. For more information please visit thep.ca.

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Colleen Jones, Mayor of the City of Trail & THEC Chair
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FAQ to follow.

BL Media Release FAQ Attachment

Why should I get my children's blood lead tested every year?

Blood lead levels vary year to year depending on where the child is spending their time (home, daycare, and outdoor play), their behaviour (crawling, hand to mouth activity) and their nutritional status (wide range of healthy foods, adequate iron stores). Blood lead testing ensures that children with elevated blood lead levels are identified and provided follow-up care. As a community, blood lead testing also helps monitor our overall progress in reducing lead exposure in the community. As lead can come from many sources, even if your home received soil management, you should continue to test your children's blood each year.

What should I do if I want to get my child's blood lead level tested?

Every year, THEP offers free voluntary testing of blood lead levels for children from the age of 6 to 36 months living in Trail, Casino, Oasis, Rivervale, Waneta and Warfield. Children up to 5 years old from other Lower Columbia communities are welcome to attend. Clinics are typically held in September with a follow-up clinic in February.

Please contact the Interior Health Public Health nurse for details. Call 250-364-6223 or text 250-231-5945.

Why is the blood lead clinic in September?

Lead levels are expected to be highest at the end of summer as windows and doors are open to the outdoors more, kids are playing outdoors more, and the ground in the community is snow-free and dry.

Are we going in the right direction?

Yes! We have seen a downward trend over the years. It's been under 3 micrograms per decilitre since 2018 with this year the average blood lead level being 2.3 micrograms per decilitre. To compare, in the 1990s, the average blood Pb level in Trail children was over 14 µg/dL.

Are we ever going to reach a safe blood lead level in Trail?

There is currently no known safe blood lead level. Canadian and U.S. health surveys indicate that the majority of the population has some exposure to lead. For the past five years, the average blood lead level for children 6-36 months in Trail has fallen below 2.5 micrograms per decilitre and 90% of children tested are below the B.C. C.D.C.'s Exposure Investigation Level (of 5 µg/dL).

What is lead (Pb) in airborne dust and how does it affect the community?

Dust particles present in smelter emissions contain lead (Pb). Dust particles in the air that contain Pb is referred to as 'lead in airborne dust'. This lead in airborne dust may travel from the smelter site and settle in the community as part of the dust and soil. In Trail, lead in airborne dust originating at the smelter site can come from fugitive dust emissions (e.g. stockpiles, open handling of materials, buildings and vehicle traffic) and stack emissions. Bare soils, deteriorating older paint, and other industries in the community can also add to Pb in airborne dust.

Is lead (Pb) in air going in the right direction?

Yes! Over the past 30 years, there have been significant reductions to levels of lead in air. Lead in airborne dust levels measured at Butler Park and Birchbank meet the US EPA standard of $0.15 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ on a 3-month average. The variability in the data reflects the influence of emissions and weather including dominant wind direction and precipitation. Read [THEP's Lead \(Pb\) Fact Sheet](#) to learn more.