November 2026

USC CLEAN Report: Soil Lead Levels in Boyle Heights Following the Lineage Fire

USC CLEAN is a free soil testing program that began in the wake of the 2025 L.A. fires and has tested 6,400+ soil samples collected by community members in L.A. County. Learn more at bit.ly/CLEANsoil

On June 17, 2026, a fire broke out at the Lineage Logistics cold storage warehouse in Boyle Heights, burning for eight days. The fire sent smoke across surrounding neighborhoods and left persistent odors and pest problems as stored food decayed. Local healthcare providers reported that patients experienced respiratory symptoms, eye irritation, and worsening asthma.

Air monitoring near the warehouse and in adjacent neighborhoods did not detect significant levels of airborne **lead** or other heavy metals. However, residents of Boyle Heights remained concerned, largely because the neighborhood already faces a legacy of soil lead contamination from decades of emissions at the former Exide battery recycling facility nearby.



Image from LA Times, 2026

On July 1 and July 17, CLEAN researchers collected 50 soil and roadside dust samples near the Lineage warehouse, including from parks and streets. In the five months following the fire, residents also submitted 29 soil samples from 10 properties within three miles of the warehouse.

Health Risk from Lead in Soil Samples near the Lineage Fire: Low

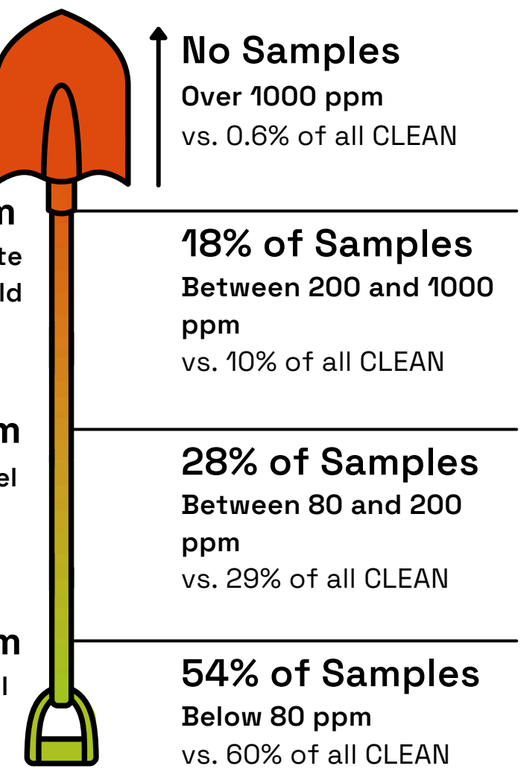
70 ppm

Across the researcher- and resident-collected samples since the fire, the average (*median) lead level was 70 ppm, below California's screening level for lead in soils (80 ppm).

CLEAN found no pattern of increasing lead levels closer to the Lineage facility.

These findings address soil lead only and do not assess the fire's other potential environmental or health impacts.
More on how urban fires impact lead in soil.

Soil Lead Levels: Post-Fire Boyle Heights vs. All 6,400 CLEAN Samples



Compare:

109 ppm

Average* lead in samples collected from elsewere in L.A. and submitted to CLEAN in the 5 months since the fire.

190 ppm

Average* lead in Boyle Heights soils collected by the State of California in 2019, 7 years pre-fire.

399 ppm

Average* lead at 3 Boyle Heights properties collected pre-fire and submitted to CLEAN (March 2025 to May 2026). *Self-selected samples from just three properties may not represent lead levels across Boyle Heights.*

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