

DonCast 2026

Unapproved Fill Material

What Neighbors Should Know



**Construction
& Demolition
Department**

You May Have Seen This



1301 Third Street, Suite 618
Detroit, Michigan 48226
(313) 224-4737
Demo-info@detroitmi.gov
www.detroitmi.gov/demolition

ATTENTION NEIGHBORS

The City will be conducting soil testing at a nearby property to verify that the fill material used after demolition meets required environmental standards. This testing is part of a coordinated effort the City launched in July 2025 based on information that unapproved fill material may have been used at certain demolition sites across Detroit.

Environmental professionals will collect samples and send them to certified environmental laboratories for analysis. You may notice contractors, vehicles, or sampling equipment during this work. Please stay off the property.

After laboratory results are available, the City will issue a follow-up notice only if the fill material does not meet environmental standards and requires removal and replacement.

A list of properties being tested in your area, their current status, and the laboratory reports for sites requiring removal and replacement will be available online. You can access this information via the QR code or by following the steps listed below.



- Go to the City website (www.detroitmi.gov).
- Select “Departments” from the Menu.
- Select “Construction and Demolition Department” from the list.
- Scroll down toward the bottom of the page and select “2025 Soil Test Results from Demolition Sites”

In the meantime, please avoid properties where testing is actively underway and be mindful of the process. If you have any questions about the process, please contact us at demo-info@detroitmi.gov or (313) 224-4737.

What's Happening and Why?

- The City received information that unapproved fill material may have been used at certain demolition sites prior to November 2025.
- The City is conducting targeted environmental testing at select demolition sites to verify that the fill used after demolition meets contractual environmental standards.
 - Testing will determine whether corrective action is needed, which may include removing and replacing fill material.



What Property Owners Should Know

Property owners will receive a letter regarding their property to request authorization to test and, if necessary, remove and replace non-compliant fill.

What to expect

- If authorized, the City will test the fill material at no cost to the property owner.
- Property owners will receive direct communication from the City regarding next steps

If testing is accepted

- Property owners must clear the property and provide access for testing
- Please do not disturb the soil or interfere with the testing process

If action is required

- If fill does not meet environmental standards, the City will remove and replace it at no cost to the property owner
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What Neighbors Should Know

- Sampling is focused on selected sites; nearby residents (within 400ft) are notified for awareness only
 - Receiving a notice does not mean your property is being tested
 - No action is required from neighbors
 - Please be mindful of testing activity and avoid active testing areas
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How Do I Find More Information?

A list of properties being tested in your area, their status, and laboratory reports for sites requiring removal and replacement will be available online.

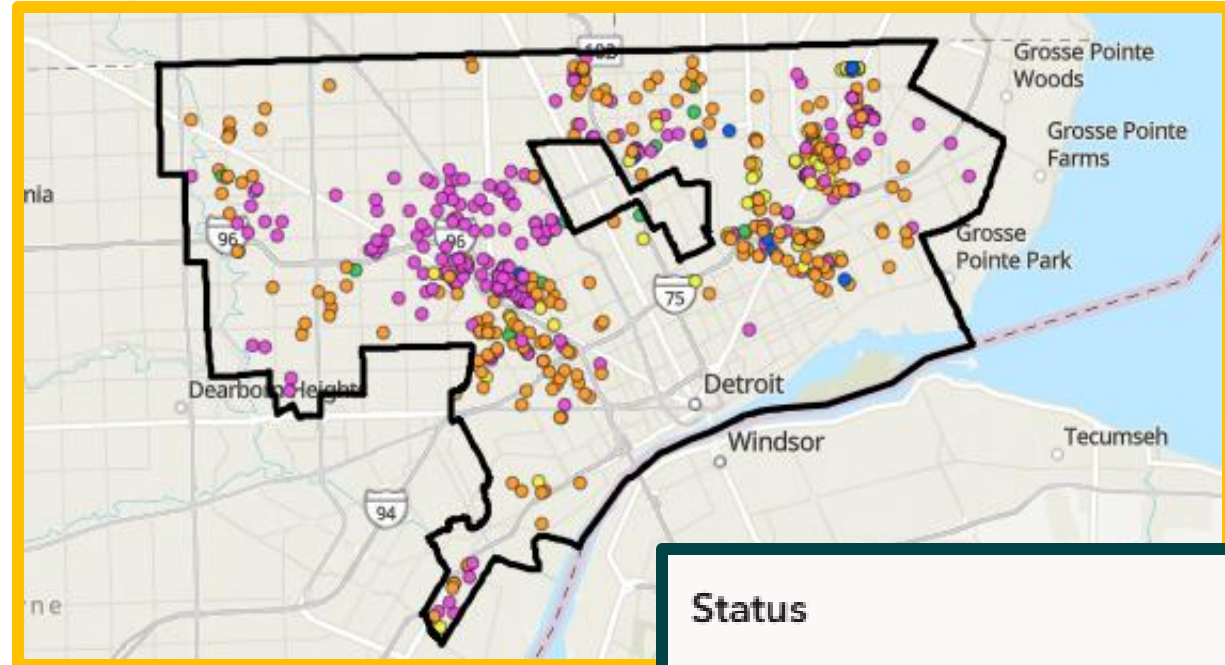
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Interactive Testing Map

- Color-coded map shows the current status of testing at each property
- Fill Material Sampling Report
 - Laboratory reports for sites requiring removal and replacement are available online



Status

- Removal / Replacement Completed
- Tested - Removal / Replacement In-Progress
- Tested - Fill Meets Standards
- Tested - Awaiting Results
- Scheduled for Testing



How Many Sites Are Being Tested?

- More than 400 publicly owned sites are included in the testing effort
- More than 300 publicly owned sites have already been tested
- The city is actively contacting owners of more than 100 privately owned sites to request permission for testing

What Does The Testing Process Look Like?



What's In The Fill?

Arsenic— detected at 316 sites

Chromium— detected at 124 sites

Naphthalene— detected at 33 sites

Zinc— detected at 33 sites

Mercury— detected at 24 sites

Phenanthrene— detected at 23 sites

Results reflect testing completed as of February 2026

Understanding Test Results

Arsenic

An extremely common, naturally occurring element that is also a frequent industrial contaminant across SE Michigan

Chromium

A metal that occurs naturally in soil and can also come from historic industrial activity

Zinc

A common metal found in soils and building materials

Mercury

A metal that can be present in small amounts in soil and debris

Naphthalene

An organic compound used in the manufacturing of plastics and dyes

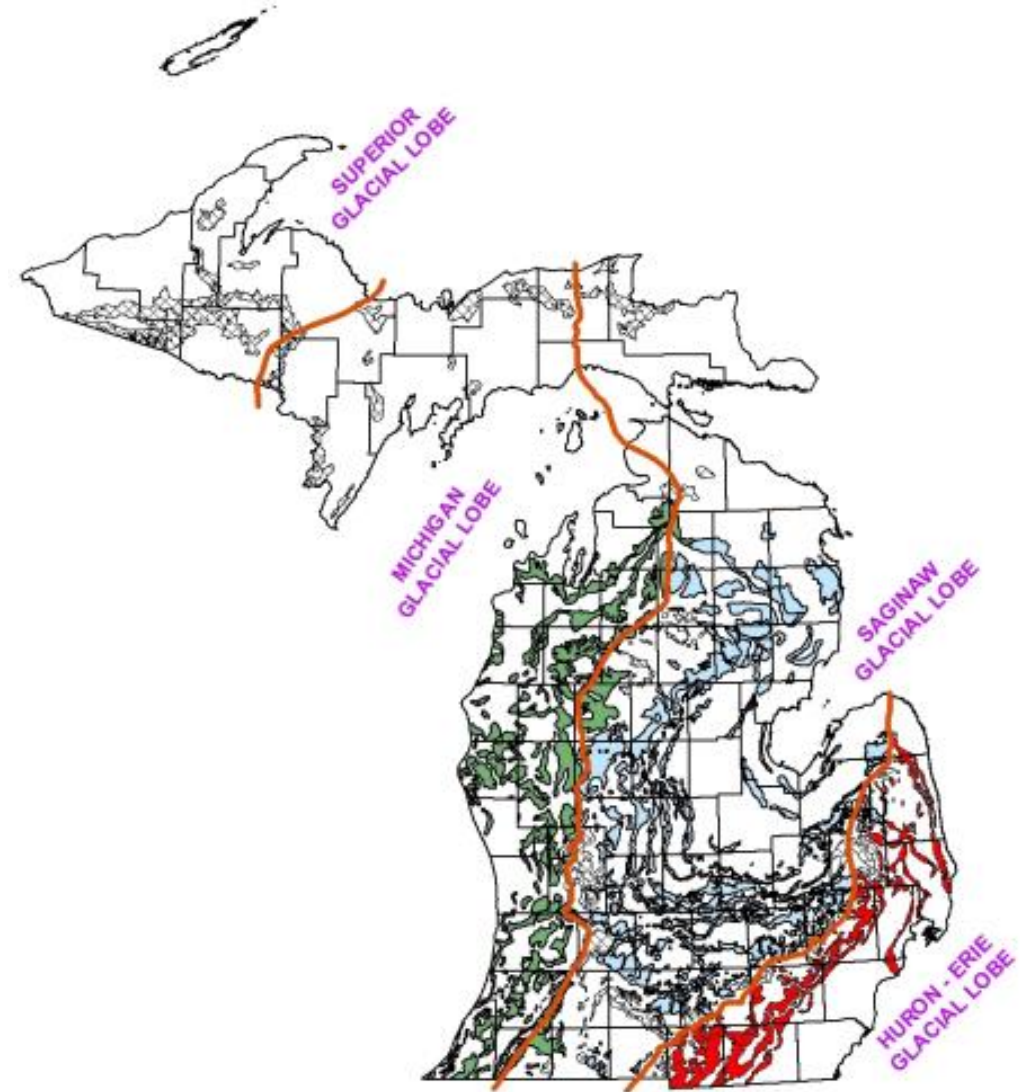
Phenanthrene

A chemical used in the manufacturing of dyes, plastics, pesticides, and more

Why Certain Metals Occur Naturally in Michigan Soils

"The presence of metals may be naturally occurring due to Michigan's geology and glacial history...Michigan's unique geology and glacial history has resulted in the deposition of many naturally occurring metals in soils."

- Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy Remediation and Redevelopment Division (EGLE)



What Happens After Testing?

If fill meets standards:
No further action is required.

If fill does not meet standards:
Contractors remove and replace the fill material and property owners and neighbors are notified throughout the process.

Why These Results Trigger Action

- The City's demolition program includes the strictest state environmental standard in all contracts
- These standards are designed to ensure consistent and safe conditions at demolition sites across Detroit
- When testing results exceed those contractual standards, the City pursues corrective action
- Corrective action includes removal and replacement of the fill material

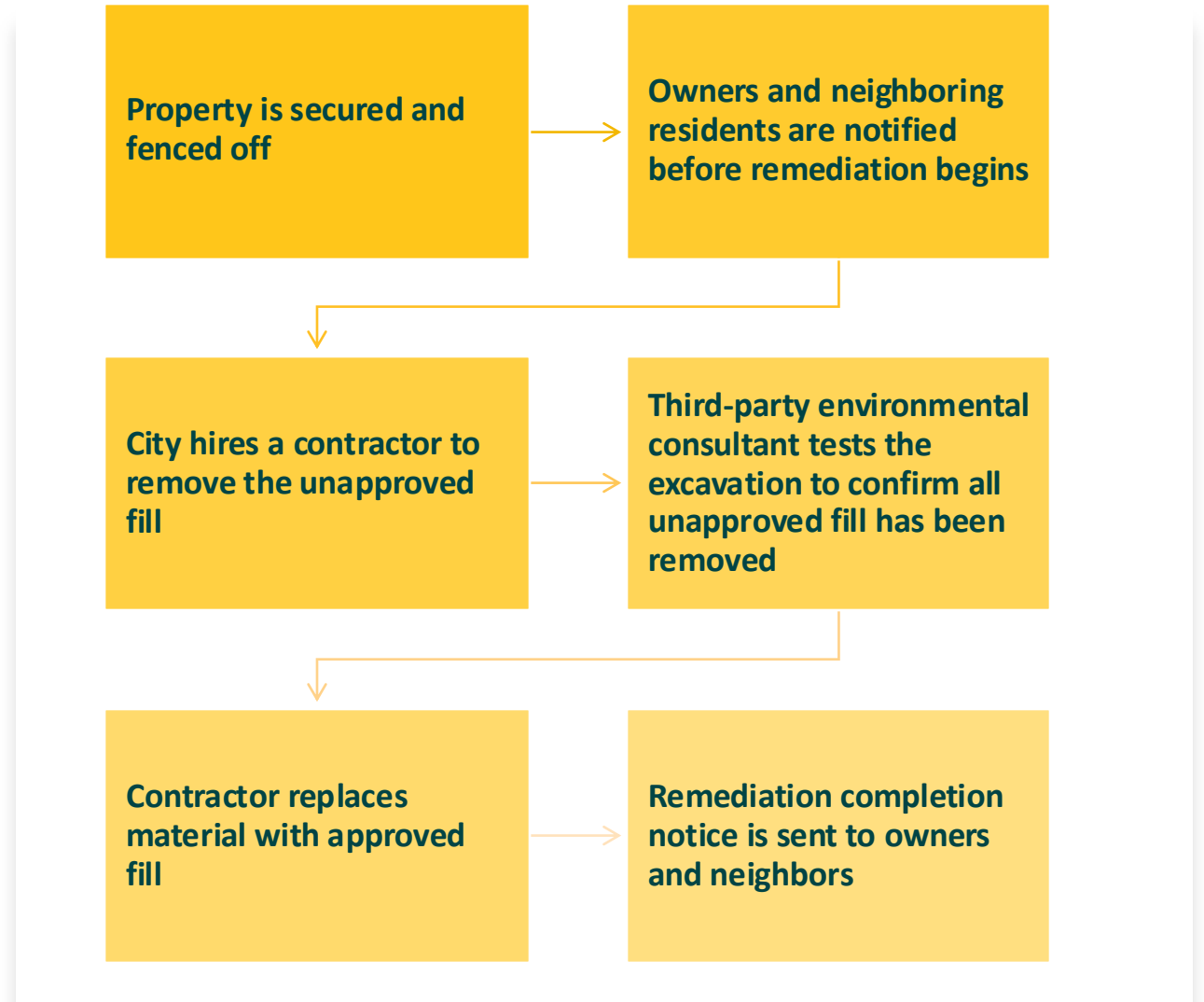
Health & Safety: Am I at Risk?

There is no known risk to the public

- The material in question is buried a foot or more below ground, preventing the likelihood of interaction and disturbance.
- Potential exposure is only possible through direct contact with the fill
- The negative health effects from direct contact would require years, or even decades, of exposure.
- The public is asked to avoid those areas during testing and remediation



How Does The Replacement Process Look?



What Notifications Follow Fill Testing?



Impacted Remediation Start Notice:

1301 Third Street, Suite 618
Detroit, Michigan 48226
(313) 224-4737
[Demo-info@detroitmi.gov](mailto:demo-info@detroitmi.gov)
www.detroitmi.gov/demolition

ATTENTION NEIGHBORS

We received information of unapproved fill material used to fill the hole resulting from the demolition at the address above.

Testing results indicate that the material did not meet contractual standards for environmental quality. Accordingly, the material will be removed and replaced. Removal of the fill material is expected to begin within 6–8 weeks, and the full removal and replacement process may take several additional weeks to complete.

A list of properties being tested in your area, their current status, and the laboratory reports for sites requiring removal and replacement will be available online. You can access this information via the QR code or by following the steps listed below.



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Please be attentive to the remediation process, and please stay off the property. If you have any questions about the process, please contact us at demo-info@detroitmi.gov or (313) 224-4737.



Remediation Completion Notice:

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ATTENTION NEIGHBORS

Testing confirmed that the previous fill used after demolition did not meet contractual environmental standards. The material at the property identified above **has now been removed and replaced**. No further action is required.

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Process Improvements & Oversight Enhancements

- Using only approved native material sources. The City will no longer use fill from other residential developments or stockpiled material that is difficult to verify.
 - Reducing approved source sites from 14 to 7 to strengthen quality control.
 - Implementing testing protocols at each source pit, with inspections increasing from annual to monthly.
 - Enhancing City contracting language to ensure material leaving the source matches what is placed at the demolition site.
 - Introducing random testing of fill material as it is placed at demolition sites.
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How DLBA Properties Are Handled During Testing

- Lots undergoing environmental testing are temporarily held from sale while site conditions are verified
- Environmental testing is focused on individual properties, not entire blocks
- CDD has not directed DLBA to stop selling surrounding properties, and does not have the authority to do so
- Testing is conducted to confirm that the fill material used after demolition meets the City's environmental standards before a property is sold
- Once testing is completed and a property meets standards, DLBA may make the lot available for sale

General Timeline

Initial testing:
3–4 weeks

**Removal
(If Required)**
6–8 weeks

**Replacement
Fill:**
3-4 weeks

Testing across all
identified sites is
expected to
conclude by late
Spring 2026

Timelines vary by location and weather

Questions or Need More Information?



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