



9(2)(a)

Dear 9(2)(a)

Thank you for your email of 19 May 2021 requesting the following under the Official Information Act 1982 (the Act):

*I would like to make a request under the Official Information Act for any soil test results from surveys either conducted by the Ministry or provided to the Ministry, which show lead above permitted levels in:*

1. residential areas
2. schools
3. public parks/playgrounds

*Further to my request below, I meant to state a timeframe – I would like any results from the last 10 years.*

A search of the Ministry for the Environment's (the Ministry's) database has returned a substantial number of documents that potentially fall within scope of your request. On 1 and 10 June, the Ministry contacted you to refine the scope of your request. Thank you for taking the time to provide clarification of the scope and suggested search alternatives.

Further searches of the Ministry's database continued to provide a substantial number of documents potentially within scope of the request. The Ministry carried out a review of a sample of those search results, which identified no documents that fell within scope. To assess all the documents found within the searches would require substantial research and, therefore, your request has been refused under section 18(f) of the Act, as the information requested cannot be made available without substantial collation or research.

The information you seek may be available through other organisations:

- the Waste Management Institute of New Zealand ([www.wasteminz.org.nz/](http://www.wasteminz.org.nz/)) who have a Residential Lead Focus Group.
- The Ministry of Education may have information regarding school sites, as they are aware of lead paint as an issue with health and safety implications.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.education.govt.nz/school/property-and-transport/health-and-safety-management/risks-and-hazards-on-school-property/#LeadbasedPaint>

- The Ministry of Health (or public health units and district health boards) may also be better positioned to provide data about lead poisoning, as this is a notifiable condition.
- Local Government may also have data on contaminated sites within in their area.

Regarding your query about the guideline values, the table below includes the values for the three different types of residential areas.

**Table B2: Soil contaminant standards for health (SCS<sub>(health)</sub>) for inorganic substances**

	Arsenic mg/kg	Boron mg/kg	Cadmium (pH 5) <sup>1</sup> mg/kg	Chromium		Copper mg/kg	Inorganic lead mg/kg	Inorganic mercury mg/kg
				III	VI			
				mg/kg	mg/kg			
Rural residential / lifestyle block 25% produce	17	>10,000	0.8	>10,000	290	>10,000	160	200
Residential 10% produce	20	>10,000	3	>10,000	460	>10,000	210	310
High-density residential	45	>10,000	230	>10,000	1,500	>10,000	500	1,000
Recreation	80	>10,000	400	>10,000	2,700	>10,000	880	1,800
Commercial / industrial outdoor worker (unpaved)	70	>10,000	1,300	>10,000	6,300	>10,000	3,300	4,200

Notes: All concentrations refer to dry weight (ie, mg/kg dry weight).

<sup>1</sup> Default value is for soil that is pH 5. Concentrations increase with increasing pH (see *Methodology*).

These have been set in accordance with the *Methodology for deriving standards for contaminants in soil to protect human health* which you can find at the following link: <https://environment.govt.nz/publications/methodology-for-deriving-standards-for-contaminants-in-soil-to-protect-human-health/>. To interpret the table, the “25% produce” and “10% produce” refers to 25 and 10 per cent respectively, of food consumed by the household having been produced on site. If you would like to discuss these guidelines, our Principal Analyst – Contaminated Land, Bruce Croucher can be contacted on 022 592 2826.

You have the right to seek an investigation and review by the Office of the Ombudsman of my decision to withhold information relating to this request, in accordance with section 28(3) of the Act. The relevant details can be found on their website at:

[www.ombudsman.parliament.nz](http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz).

Please note that due to the public interest in our work the Ministry for the Environment publishes responses to requests for official information on our [OIA responses page](#) shortly after the response has been sent. If you have any queries about this, please feel free to contact our Ministerial Services team: [ministerials@mfe.govt.nz](mailto:ministerials@mfe.govt.nz).

Yours sincerely



Glenn Wigley

**Director – Waste and Resource Efficiency, Policy and Regulatory**