

SAMPLING INSTRUCTIONS FOR TOTAL SORBED METALS TEST

A metals test is only as good as the sample. Collect a sample that represents the area you want to evaluate.

Before you sample

- Consider the site history (older painted buildings, roads, old orchards, industry, imported fill/compost).
- Metals tend to stay where they land unless the soil is moved or mixed (tilling, excavation, grading).
- If you suspect a hot spot, sample it separately and (if helpful) sketch a simple map of the areas you sampled.

Common sources

Lead is a frequent concern in populated areas. Higher lead is often found close to older painted structures and near the soil surface. Roadside soil can also show higher lead from historic traffic emissions.

Arsenic can be elevated in some older orchards due to historic pesticide use, often near tree drip lines. Arsenic can also be higher next to pressure-treated wood, where chemicals have leached into nearby soil.

Industrial or mining-related contamination is harder to predict. Learn what you can from local sources and focus sampling on likely impacted areas.

Sampling depth

- Near foundations, roadsides, and play areas: sample the top 1–2 inches.
- Gardens and planting beds: sample 6–8 inches.
- If children dig deeper, you can also take a separate, deeper sample to compare.

How to collect

1. Define the area represented by the sample. Keep distinct areas separate.
2. With a clean bucket and shovel/trowel, collect 12+ subsamples from evenly distributed spots.
3. Combine and mix thoroughly in the bucket.

Prepare and submit

- Break up clods, remove stones/roots/debris, and mix again.
- Scoop about 1 cup of soil and air-dry it on clean paper (a fan on low is fine). Do not heat the sample.
- Put about 1 cup of dry soil in a zip-top bag and label it with your Sample ID (match page 1 of this form).
- Deliver or mail the labeled sample(s), this form, and payment as a check or money order payable to UConn to the following address. You may also pay online; if paid online, write your online receipt/order # in the box located in front of this form.

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This test is intended for mineral soils. Contact SNAL before submitting composts or soilless media.