

The Site Profile System

In consultations on proposed amendments to the former *Waste Management Act*, local governments stated that they wanted a legally defined, uniform process to screen potentially contaminated sites. In response, the Ministry of Environment developed the site profile system.

Site profiles are forms that require information about the past and present uses of a site, as well as basic land descriptions. They require readily available information, and should not require the assistance of a consultant to complete.

The content and format of a site profile are provided in Schedule 1 of the *Environmental Management Act's* Contaminated Sites Regulation.

The ministry has prepared a user-friendly version of the site profile, which contains additional official use sections. Site profile users are encouraged to use this version of the form.

Sections IV through VIII of the form are key parts of the site profile. They consist of a series of questions (requiring “yes” or “no” responses) and regarding areas of the site of potential concern, the presence of fill, waste, tanks or containers or hazardous substances.

When must a site profile be completed?

There must be a legal trigger in the Act or Regulation for a site profile to be completed and submitted. Site profiles submitted to the

ministry for other reasons are not legally considered site profiles, and are not subject to the usual site profile processing requirements.

For instructions on submitting a profile, see Administrative Guidance document 1, “Completing and Submitting Site Profiles”).

Deciding whether a site profile is required involves a three-step process:

Step 1. Determine if any of the activities listed in Schedule 2 have occurred on the site.

Schedule 2 of the Regulation is a list of commercial and industrial activities and uses that are associated with potential contamination of a site.

The general categories include:

- chemical industries
- electrical equipment industries
- mining and milling industries
- petroleum and natural gas industries
- transportation industries
- waste disposal and recycling
- wood, pulp and paper industries

The person completing the site profile determines if any of the specific activities or uses in any of the above general categories is occurring or has occurred on the site.

If the answer is no, then there is no requirement to complete a site profile. If the answer is yes, then a site profile may have to be completed.

Step 2. Establish if a specific type of application or activity is involved.

If any of the following applications or activities specified in the legislation is involved, a site profile may have to be completed:

- applying for subdivision, zoning, development or development variance, soil removal, or demolition;
- decommissioning a site;
- taking over a property as a trustee, receiver or liquidator;
- selling property that has or had a Schedule 2 activity on it; and
- applying for a Certificate of Restoration under the *Petroleum and Natural Gas Act*.

Step 3. Decide if any exemptions apply.

There are over 10 exemptions from the requirement to submit a site profile. The Regulation or the ministry's Administrative Guidance document 1, "Completing and Submitting Site Profiles," should be consulted for further detail.

In summary, a site profile must be completed and submitted if a Schedule 2 use or activity applies, a specific type of activity or application is involved, and there are no applicable exemptions. In addition, a site profile must be submitted if one is ordered by a Director of Waste Management.

To whom are site profiles submitted?

Site profiles must be submitted to different parties, depending on the items summarized in Step 2 above.

Items 1 and 2 involve local government officials, and sometimes a Director. Under item 3, a site profile should be submitted to a Director. Item 4 involves submission to a prospective purchaser of property, and items 5 through 7 involve submission to officials from the Oil and Gas Commission.

Assessing site profiles

Once a site profile is submitted, it is assessed by the party to whom it is submitted within 15 days. If it is not satisfactorily completed, it will be returned for correction. When complete, it will often be assessed. If there are any responses in sections IV through VIII of the form, and if the site profile was submitted to local government, it will be forwarded to a Director.

The person submitting the site profile will be informed within 15 days if this has been done. If there are all no responses, the site profile will be forwarded to the Site Registrar in Victoria and entered into the Site Registry.

Site investigations

Once a site profile has been received by a Director, he or she will determine whether a site investigation is required.

Note: This summary is solely for the convenience of the reader. The current legislation and regulations should be consulted for complete information.

For more information, contact the Environmental Management Branch at site@gov.bc.ca