



## **SITE CONTAMINATION**

### **Guideline for communication and engagement**

**November 2018**

For consultants, site owners, and appropriate persons  
liable for site contamination





# 1 Who should use these guidelines?

Like all industrialised cities, Adelaide and South Australian regional centres are confronted with managing or remediating historical site contamination. The scope of the community engagement plan should be directly proportionate to the size and nature of the extent of the contamination.

The South Australian Environment Protection Authority (EPA) expects that the person who has liability for site contamination will undertake or fund a communication and engagement program. This guideline has been prepared to describe the EPA's expectations for those who undertake communication and engagement in relation to site contamination.

This guideline is intended to help landowners and parties responsible for the assessment and remediation of site contamination, to better understand their responsibilities to the community for appropriate consultation and engagement. It outlines the expectations of the EPA and establishes a protocol for managing communication and engagement for site contamination in South Australia. It is intended that managing each stage of the process will ensure a consistent approach across the State.

Where no appropriate person<sup>1</sup> as defined in the *Environment Protection Act 1993* (EP Act) exists to assign legal liability to for assessment or remediation, or the person responsible lacks capacity to meet the costs of assessment or remediation, the EPA may undertake the communication and engagement at sites that are contaminated to an extent that presents a significant<sup>2</sup> public health risk. These are referred to as 'orphan sites', which is a term used nationally and internationally.

## 2 Terminology

This document uses the following terms as defined in Table 1 below:

**Table 1 – Terminology**

Term	Definition
<b>Stakeholder</b>	<p>Any person, business or group that has an interest in or is affected by the assessment and remediation works associated with site contamination. It includes but is not limited to local landholders, businesses, residents, special interest groups, councils, the media, and parliamentary representatives.</p> <p>In order to properly identify project stakeholders, the person undertaking engagement will need to identify people who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• are directly involved and/or affected</li><li>• are likely to be affected or impact the process</li><li>• need a voice<sup>3</sup>.</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> An appropriate person will not exist if the person has died, ceased to exist (body corporate), cannot be identified or located, or will be unable to carry out or meet the costs of the assessment or remediation required.

<sup>2</sup> As informed by the risk profile of the substance involved and consistent with international public health practice e.g. the Indoor air level response range for TCE (SA Health 2014).

<sup>3</sup> Adapted from the IAP<sup>2</sup> Quality Assurance Standard for Community and Stakeholder Engagement

Term	Definition
<b>Communication and engagement</b>	<p>Communication is the sending and receiving of information and messages from one party to another. Whilst it usually involves informing and telling, we consider it to be a two-way exchange that involves listening and responding.</p> <p>Engagement is actively bringing community and stakeholder voices into the decisions that affect or interest them. It involves dialogue, listening, responding and the building of relationships. Importantly, communication is used to engage.</p>
<b>Appropriate person</b>	<p>The appropriate person may be the original polluter, or past or current site owner. In the case where these entities no longer exist, or are not financially viable, if there is a significant public health risk, the government may act to ensure site contamination is appropriately managed on behalf of the public. The appropriate person is the organisation or responsible party required to undertake assessment and remediation of the contaminated site. This includes engaging with the community.</p>
<b>Lead communicator</b>	<p>The appropriate person liable for site contamination is the ‘lead communicator’, and manages the communication and engagement process, as outlined in this guideline. The lead communicator is the organisation responsible for implementing the Community Engagement Plan. Where no appropriate person is involved, the EPA may act as the lead communicator for sites that are contaminated to an extent that there is a likelihood it presents a potential significant public health risk.</p>
<b>Community Engagement Plan</b>	<p>The community engagement plan is an outline of the engagement activities that will be undertaken to communicate and engage with a community affected by site contamination. It lists the types of actions and events, dates and responsible staff members that will undertake the work. See <a href="#">Appendix 1</a> for an example of a community engagement plan that could be used for a site where there is contamination.</p>
<b>Site contamination consultant</b>	<p>A site contamination consultant is a suitably qualified person or company that assesses the existence or nature or extent of site contamination, investigating both human health and environmental factors.</p>
<b>Auditor</b>	<p>Auditors are senior and experienced professionals accredited by the EPA, who undertake the independent review of assessment and/or remediation work carried out by site contamination consultants.</p> <p>Auditors are entitled to use the title ‘Site Contamination Auditor’ (accredited under Division 4 of Part 10A of the Act) only when acting in the capacity of an auditor. In all other situations, for example when that person is involved in any other site assessment, remediation or validation, that person is considered to be acting as a consultant.</p> <p>Auditors must comply with relevant provisions of the EP Act and associated Regulations, and are required to comply with relevant guidelines issued by the EPA<sup>4</sup>. There are significant penalties for offences and breaches of specific requirements of the audit provisions including expiations, fines and/or imprisonment.</p> <p>Individuals must satisfy a range of requirements relating to the level of their knowledge and understanding, technical competency and demonstrated experience before they can be considered eligible for accreditation as a site contamination auditor under the Act. Eligibility requirements for auditor accreditation are identified in the Regulations, and are consistent with Schedule B9 of the <i>National Environment Protection (Assessment of site contamination) Measure 1999</i>.</p>

<sup>4</sup> Mandatory guideline requirements are identified in the [Guidelines for the site contamination audit system](#).

### 3 Responsibility to engage with the community

The EP Act determines who is liable for site contamination. The EPA regulates the EP Act, which provides it with the power to issue orders in relation to site contamination to an appropriate person who has liability. The EP Act allows an order to include a condition to require that ‘specified consultations are to be carried out with owners or occupiers of land in the vicinity of the site’. It is a criminal offence to not comply with an order and the penalties are severe.

The appropriate person liable is responsible for funding the assessment and where necessary independent audit and remediation of site contamination. This includes communicating and engaging with the affected residential and business community and landowners.

Site contamination is often historical, and the person who caused the contamination may no longer exist or may not be the same party who currently occupies the site. If it is not possible to find that person or company, liability may pass to the site owner. The site owner's liability may be limited to only that site and liability is dependent on the owner's knowledge of the contamination at the time of purchase.

The organisation responsible for leading the community engagement plan will be the ‘lead communicator’ – typically the party responsible for delivering the environmental assessment or remediation program, as determined through prior discussions with the EPA. Roles and responsibilities are described in Table 2.

**Table 2 – Roles and responsibilities**

Role	Responsibilities
EPA	<p><b>When an appropriate person has been identified, the EPA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oversees the communication and engagement process and ensures its appropriateness.</li> <li>• Reviews and comments on community engagement plans on request.</li> <li>• Reviews and comments on draft communications on requested.</li> <li>• Reviews media releases and public statements.</li> <li>• Plans and prepares fact sheets and other communication materials in the public interest.</li> <li>• Makes reports and other information publically available as required under the EP Act.</li> </ul> <p><b>When an appropriate person has NOT been identified, the EPA:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Undertakes communication and engagement for sites that are contaminated to an extent that presents a significant public health risk.</li> <li>• Acts as the ‘lead communicator’ for the purposes of this guideline.</li> <li>• May recover costs for engagement work if an appropriate person liable is identified subsequently.</li> </ul>
Lead communicator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop, lead and manage the community engagement plan.</li> <li>• Manage EPA liaison and communication with the Principal Adviser Community Engagement.</li> <li>• Manage priority or highly concerned stakeholders.</li> <li>• Report on communications and engagement activities and provide regular summaries to the EPA.</li> <li>• Interface with assessment and remediation consultants.</li> <li>• Integrate the community engagement plan with assessment and remediation program.</li> <li>• Report incidents likely to generate community or media interest as soon as possible to the EPA.</li> <li>• Manage complaints and enquiries.</li> </ul>

Role	Responsibilities
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide content to the EPA for website updates on activities that might generate wider public interest.</li> <li>• Coordinate mailouts and letterbox drops to residents living and absentee landholders in the assessment area.</li> <li>• Attend community information sessions hosted by the EPA.</li> </ul>
<b>EPA media protocols</b>	The lead communicator should keep the EPA informed if contact is made by the media or political representatives.

The lead communicator is responsible for owning the Community Engagement Plan and ensuring it delivers the guiding principles outlined in this document. The lead communicator may be a private organisation, developer, or government agency.

Where there is no appropriate person liable, or the appropriate person is no longer financially viable, the SA Government via the EPA may undertake communication and engagement at sites that are contaminated to an extent that presents a significant public health risk (orphan sites). The EPA then acts as the lead communicator.

## 4 The role of the lead communicator

The lead communicator is the organisation that will manage the delivery of the community engagement plan and ensure that the appropriate person meets their communication and engagement obligations. The lead communicator should:

- Develop and maintain positive relations with stakeholders and the community by proactively identifying and responding to issues and seeking opportunities to improve community outcomes.
- Identify and report on issues raised by stakeholders or community groups that cannot be resolved directly and that may constitute a community issue.
- Establish, resource and publicise a telephone information line during the course of assessment and remediation works.
- Establish and maintain a database of all issues and enquiries received from the community, stakeholders, community groups and the public – including names, the nature of the enquiry, response provided, dates received and follow up actions undertaken.
- Acknowledge all public enquiries promptly and answer or advise of further action within a reasonable timeframe, including the likely timeframe for resolution.
- Develop and produce a range of information material for the community during construction activities including letterbox drops to affected businesses and residents, newsletters, fact sheets, advertising and personal contact<sup>5</sup>.
- Organise the translation of information materials into other languages where required.
- Provide updates for inclusion on the EPA website, where activities might generate community interest.
- Keep the EPA informed of activities, to enable the EPA to respond to enquiries from the public or media.
- Ensure key personnel are available to participate in community and stakeholder events and activities.
- Provide regular reports of community and stakeholder engagement performance.
- Undertake regular reviews of community engagement plan implementation and provide updates to the EPA.

<sup>5</sup> Fact sheets should always adhere to the ‘what, when, where, why and who’ principle and the EPA can provide guidance in their development.

## 5 The role of the EPA

The EPA is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the EP Act. The EPA receives information from various people and responds to this information in accordance with its regulatory framework.

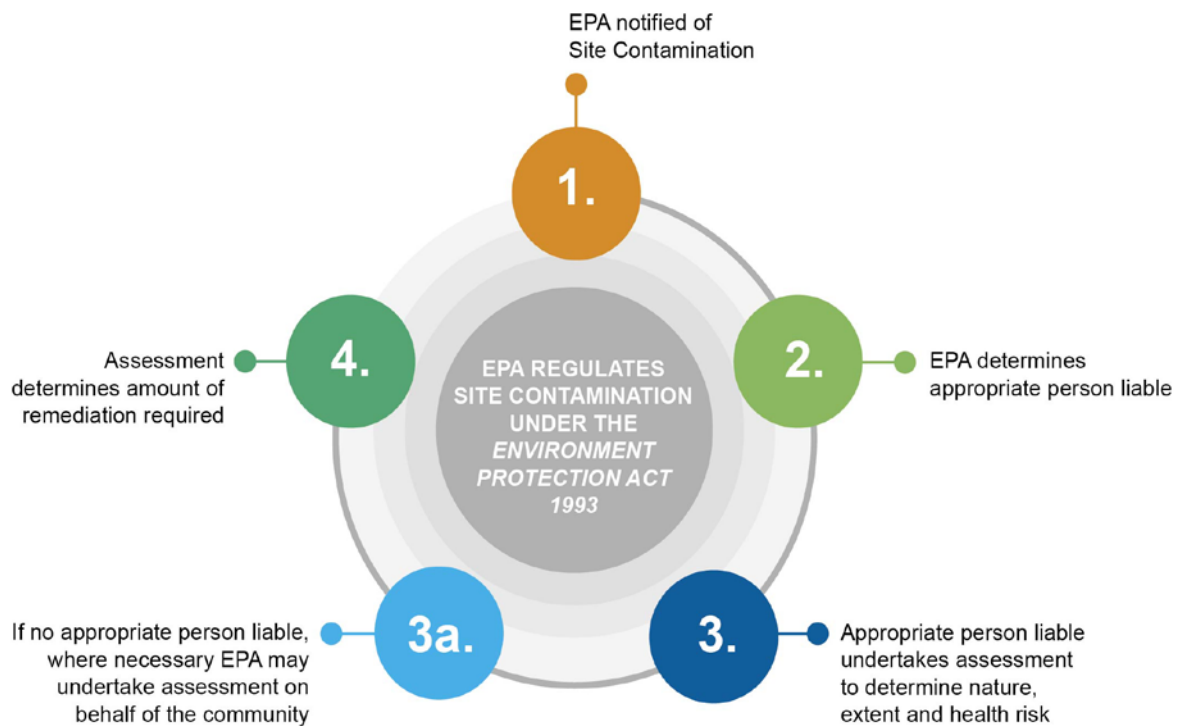


Figure 1 – Role of the EPA

### The EPA regulates site contamination, in accordance with the *Environment Protection Act 1993*

The EPA determines liability and if necessary uses its powers under the EP Act to require the assessment and remediation of site contamination. The EPA will determine if a site contamination audit is required, and can determine whether or not to accept a voluntary proposal for the assessment and remediation of site contamination.

The EPA will consider whether it is appropriate to implement institutional controls (non-engineered instruments including administrative and legal controls such as prohibiting takings of groundwater) in order to minimise the potential for exposure to contamination.

The EPA will also outline its expectations in regards to community engagement and will monitor the compliance of any ongoing requirements.

- 1 EPA notified of site contamination**
  - The Act establishes a mandatory duty for owners, occupiers, consultants and auditors to notify the EPA of site contamination that affects or threatens groundwater.
  - The EPA places information on the EPA Public Register.
  - The EPA informs the community, by giving public notice on the EPA website and in local media.
- 2 EPA determines appropriate person liable**
  - The EPA reviews information in relation to a site and makes a determination in relation to liability for site contamination – based on the legislative provisions.

- Appropriate person liable undertakes assessment and remediation (if necessary).
- Liability is retrospective.
- The EPA will outline its expectations in regards to communication and engagement.

### **3 Appropriate person undertakes assessment to determine nature, extent and significance of public health risk**

- An assessment program is designed by a suitably qualified and experienced person in accordance with the National Environment Protection Measure (NEPM).
- The assessment program must be sufficient to determine the nature and extent of contamination and public health risks associated with it.
- The program is implemented and information obtained is reviewed and a determination is made as to whether or not further assessment is required.
- Once the significance of the public health risk is understood, a determination is made as to the level of remediation required to manage this risk.
- The appropriate person is responsible for communication and engagement.

#### **3a If no appropriate person is liable**

The State Government via the EPA, may undertake assessment on behalf of a community if:

- There is no appropriate person to assign legal liability to for assessment, remediation or mitigation, or the person responsible lacks capacity to meet the costs of assessment, remediation or mitigation;
- The site is contaminated to an extent that presents a significant public health risk.

The EPA will also ensure the community is informed and will oversee the communication and engagement process.

### **4 Assessment determines the amount of remediation required**

- EPA regulates the remediation of site contamination.
- To remediate a site means treat, contain, remove or manage chemical substances on or below the surface of the site so as to–
  - (a) eliminate or prevent actual or potential harm to the health or safety of human beings that is not trivial, taking into account current or proposed land uses; and
  - (b) eliminate or prevent, as far as reasonably practicable –
    - (i) actual or potential harm to water that is not trivial; and
    - (ii) any other actual or potential environmental harm that is not trivial, taking into account current or proposed land uses.
- A remediation program is designed by a suitably qualified and experienced person in accordance with EPA and other guidance.
- The information obtained throughout remediation is reviewed and a determination is made as to whether or not further remediation is required.
- A proposal is put to the EPA or the site contamination auditor that no further remediation is required.
- Appropriate person liable is responsible for communication and engagement, even if they did not cause the contamination.



## 6 The role of SA Health

Situations are sometimes encountered where a significant public health risk is identified during the course of a site contamination audit, assessment and/or remediation.

These circumstances generally involve situations where significant off-site contamination has been identified with the potential to affect the health of the community.

SA Health supports and assists the EPA through the provision of specialist advice when it is required on toxicology and epidemiology, health risk assessment and communicating risk to the public.

SA Health provides expert scientific advice to the EPA, government and its agencies, on the assessment of environmental contaminants which may be harmful to human health. SA Health also assists in the provision of advice to affected communities and the general population.

The appropriate person should maintain close communication with the EPA, to ensure that the involvement of SA Health can be sought where appropriate and in a timely manner (see also [Appendix 2](#)).

## 7 When to engage

Once it has been identified that assessment work is going to impact on the community, whether it be a minimal (such as drilling bores in road reserves) or a major impact (such as requiring bore holes to be drilled and tested on private properties), it is important to determine the level of engagement required.

All relevant stakeholder groups should have been identified during the development of the community engagement plan, and include groups with specific information needs including schools, community organisations and local elected members.

Early engagement with these groups should occur to ensure their information needs are also met. This may include providing information for community newsletters or regularly providing hard copies of material.

The EPA will maintain relationships with key members of State and Federal Parliaments. The EPA's role with other key stakeholder groups including council or sensitive receivers should be determined through the development of the community engagement plan and will vary depending on the program, level of risk and public profile.

The lead communicator will be responsible for organising and facilitating meetings. Some of the project points that should be considered are outlined in Table 3.

The specific requirements for an individual site should be identified in the community engagement plan and may not include engagement with the community at each stage.

**Table 3 – project phases that may trigger communication and engagement**

Phase	Objective
<b>Pre-phase communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Advice that environmental assessments are required and the justification for this determination.</li><li>• The objectives or outcomes expected in the environmental assessment process.</li><li>• Who is undertaking the works and who to contact for further information.</li></ul>
<b>Service location and drilling</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Begin communications and engagement prior to any person commencing any work in the area.</li><li>• Begin development of relationships within the community.</li><li>• Ensure no surprises for residents at the commencement of on the ground works.</li><li>• Understand any requirements from community regarding the works, including access or timing needs.</li></ul>

Phase	Objective
Sampling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Notify residents around sampling points when they can expect to see works.</li> <li>Continue to build relationships with the community by maintaining regular contact.</li> </ul>
Lab analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build community understanding of the process of returning data that is then analysed by experts in their field.</li> <li>Develop an understanding within the community that there is a process for data analysis, and that it takes time to undertake this rigorously in order to provide results with integrity.</li> </ul>
Assessment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Further develop community understanding of the assessment process and possible next steps.</li> <li>Confirm timing for the receipt of results (interpretation of data).</li> </ul>
Results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide a plain English understanding of the final report to support community understanding/fact sheet/presentation/report summary.</li> </ul>
Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outline the agreed next steps, what the community can expect to see and how they can continue contact if further support is required.</li> </ul>

This should be done in consultation with the EPA, however the following table may be used as a guide. Table 4 shows the type of engagement techniques that may be appropriate for different levels of activity.

**Table 4 – engagement activities suitable for each phase**

Assessment/ remediation phase of works	Letter explaining works	Provide contact details, information phone line	Fact sheet /brochure	Website content update	Email updates	Site visits/ face -to-ace meetings	Community Working Group	Community Information Sessions
Drilling/testing required on public property (consultants visible in the community)	✓	✓	✓					
Testing/sampling required on private property	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Results of testing has impact on the community	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Process of remediation has impact on the community	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Audit report finalises assessment and close out of works	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓

## 8 Starting the communication and engagement process

The stages involved in the on-the-ground delivery of stakeholder engagement can be summarised as:

- 1 Stakeholder 'mapping', or determining who is impacted by the works.
- 2 Analysing the likely interests or issues that might be experienced by different types of stakeholders.
- 3 Determining what level of engagement is appropriate, in conjunction with the EPA.
- 4 Development of a site-specific community engagement plan (see [Appendix 1](#) for example).
- 5 Preparing introductory communications.
- 6 Assessment program communications and engagement.
- 7 Case management for key stakeholders.
- 8 Communicating testing or remediation results.
- 9 Determining next steps.

The following section outlines the considerations for each of these elements of on-the-ground delivery, for a range of scenarios by the lead communicator.

Schedule B9 of the *National Environment Protection (Assessment of Site Contamination) Measure 1999* recognises risk communication as a technical competency and it is expected that the lead communicator will be able to demonstrate experience and competency relating to communication and engagement, risk communication, or have access to such expertise.

## 9 Developing a site-specific community engagement plan

As no two communities are the same, it is important that site-specific communication and engagement strategies be developed for each site to respond to the unique issues and stakeholders for each community. 'Lessons learnt' should be incorporated and tailored for the specific site.

The community engagement plan should outline the basis for all ongoing activities with the community. Key elements include:

- Detailed stakeholder identification and analysis of potential concerns.
- Summary of proposed mitigation strategies to address issues.
- Overview of the proposed approach to engagement.
- Key project outcomes to form the basis of public communications.
- Communication and engagement tools and protocols.
- Roles and responsibilities in delivery, including the lead communicator, the EPA, council and other key stakeholders.
- Schedule for implementation, identifying engagement activities against key project milestones.

An example of a community engagement plan has been included as [Appendix 1](#), as a practical tool to indicate the type of considerations that should go into the action plan. This is a guide only, and each program may require different elements to be incorporated that are not covered in this example.

For sites where the assessment program is being led by a third party, the strategy should also define the points at which the EPA will require contact with the community in its role as regulator.

This approach to developing strategies will ensure stakeholder issues are dealt with in a consistent way across all sites, regardless of the lead communicator.

## 9.1 Preparing introductory communications

Introductory communications are the first interaction with the community and stakeholders in the local area. These communications should be underpinned by a relationship-based approach and demonstration of empathy for the community.

Depending on the level of community impact outlined in the 'When to engage' section above, this may include a combination of communications such as:

- introductory communications, introducing the site-specific issue and how the program of works will be managed going forward
- follow up communications to establish contact points and commence building relationships with the community
- a feedback loop, consisting of a telephone contact number and email address, and an offer to meet with the lead communicator as a minimum
- face to face meetings with key stakeholders such as local council, MPs, schools who have been identified during the development of the engagement plan.

The introductory communications should address the overarching site issues including:

- what we know
- what we do not know
- what we are doing to fill the gap
- what the community can expect for us.

For sites where there is likely to be wide community interest, the EPA may elect to provide an initial letter to the local community to preface the commencement of communications from the lead communicator.

The notification will advise that a site contamination matter has been identified, introduce the lead communicator and explain the role of the EPA as environmental regulator, in order to build community understanding of the role of the EPA in the engagement process.

The Community Engagement Plan should outline further points of interaction, considering the EPA as a key stakeholder in the engagement process.

In preparing the introductory communications, the following principles should be addressed:

- letter communications to remain short and address issues detailed above
- use supporting materials such as maps, figures or fact sheets where appropriate to supplement the information in the letter
- keep technical terms and details to a minimum during the initial phases of communication
- offer opportunities for the community to raise questions through different avenues including face to face, public sessions, phone or email as appropriate.

For sites that are contaminated to an extent that presents a significant public health risk, a more conservative approach is recommended. In such cases, the information should be kept to a minimum with advice that staff will be in contact for face to face meetings or personal visits.

It is important in these situations that these visits are carefully planned and resourced to fit in line with the guiding principles of empathy, relationship-building and building awareness. Sensitive information needs to be delivered in person and not left to the interpretation of the reader. 'Cold calling' or doorknocking without prior announcement is not recommended where there is site contamination, and an initial letter advising of the intention to visit is considered appropriate.

## 9.2 Assessment program communications and engagement

Assessment program communications and engagement should be undertaken by the lead communicator, after the introductory communications have outlined the scope of the assessment or remediation program and introduced the role of the EPA.

Communication and engagement needs to continue at regular intervals throughout the program, to build and maintain relationships within the community. In order to do this, there should be a variety of mechanisms for people to engage with the lead communicator regarding the site. Some of the key activities that can be considered include:

- face to face engagement such as drop-in sessions and individual resident meetings
- regular briefings for key stakeholders
- for large areas with wide interest, and where a longer term assessment program will be necessary the establishment of a Community Working Group might be appropriate, involving the lead communicator, EPA, local residents, Council or SA Health
- mail and email updates regarding the progress of the assessment; and
- educational information to build community understanding, results and next steps.

Key stages in the program delivery process should be considered when determining the communication mix and schedule for delivery. This will ensure the community does not only hear from the lead communicator or EPA at key milestones, but maintains ongoing dialogue to build trusted relationships within the assessment areas.

## 9.3 Case management for key stakeholders

Throughout the process, all stakeholders should have clear avenues for contacting the lead communicator to raise questions or have their issues addressed. Through this process a number of stakeholders with more complex or specific issues may be identified, and will require individual case management to address their concerns.

This may not include full resolution of stakeholder issues in line with their expectations, but should include:

- developing strong, trusted relationships
- early identification of underlying key issues and factors required for a successful outcome; and
- negotiation with key stakeholders for an acceptable resolution.
- Some of the key issues that may need to be addressed through detailed case management include:
  - concerns regarding short and long-term health effects
  - concerns regarding property values
  - need or requests for temporary accommodation; and
  - intervention strategies.

It is important through the development of the Community Engagement Plan for each assessment site to identify a process for escalating case management discussions. Where the lead communicator is a third party, they will need to work collaboratively with the EPA to resolve the issue to a satisfactory negotiated outcome.

## 9.4 Communicating results

Ensuring clear communication of results of assessment programs or outcomes of any remediation is an important element to building trust within the community. It demonstrates transparency and builds on the education process to develop community understanding of the process for assessing site contamination, which may include multiple phases of work.

Results communication should occur broadly, and include a summary of the technical report in easy to understand language. Multiple communication and engagement methods should be considered, operating in parallel, to ensure key stakeholders and communities have the best opportunity to understand the results and ask questions.

The process for communicating results should be discussed and agreed with the EPA as part of the development of the Community Engagement Plan.

## 9.5 Next steps

The next steps in the assessment program should be anticipated by the community, based on the regular communication and engagement during the assessment program.

The confirmed steps should be articulated at this time and information about when or if the community can expect to hear further from the lead communicator and the EPA. This includes providing contact details if further discussion or case management is required.

Communication methods may involve direct mail or letterbox drop, updates to web content or face-to-face meetings, depending on the nature of the results. In particular where mitigation measures are required, a case management approach may be required.

A community engagement plan should be developed to guide this unique phase of the project which requires significant, relationship-based engagement.

The community should understand the possible range of next steps, which are outlined in Table 5, alongside the possible communications response in each scenario.

**Table 5 – communicating results, conclusions and next steps**

Possible next step	Communication and engagement response
<b>Further assessment works</b>	Communication and engagement will be determined by the level of community interest shown to date – a high level of interest might see the need for a community working group to be established, but low or no level of community concern might mean a website update is sufficient.
<b>Changes to the scope of the assessment area</b>	An introductory letter to the new area, advice to the existing area, taking into consideration the point above.
<b>Monitoring over time</b>	See above.
<b>Restrictions on land use (institutional controls)</b>	Engagement with local council as required, letter notification to affected area, media release and close consultation with the EPA in regards to timing, messaging and release.
<b>Intervention (including possible remediation or mitigation)</b>	Plan for next phase of communication and engagement.

## 10 EPA support for delivery of the community engagement plan

Where the EPA is not the lead communicator, it will support third party delivery of the Community Engagement Plan where it will assist in the mitigation of risk or add value to the process. This may include but not be limited to:

- review and approval of communication and engagement strategies
- attend meetings with key stakeholders as required in its role as South Australia’s environmental regulator
- provide background on key stakeholders and existing structures within communities in which EPA has previously conducted engagement activities
- provide information relevant to the assessment program on the EPA website, such as copies of public correspondence and assessment reports; and
- provide access to a suite of existing communications material (such as fact sheets) that can be used to support engagement activities and educate communities.

## 11 Principles of engaging effectively with the community

The approach outlined in this document is aligned with a number of principles of best practice communication and engagement and risk communication both internationally, nationally and through the South Australian Government.

Internationally, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has established a well-recognised and adopted framework for the various levels of stakeholder engagement. These are outlined in Table 6 below. The approach outlined in this framework focuses on the levels of ‘inform’, ‘consult’ and ‘involve’.

**Table 6 – Incorporating the IAP2 Public Participation Spectrum**

	IAP2 goal	Community	IAP2 commitment	Techniques
Inform	To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problems, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.	General public, elected representatives, residents, businesses, landholders and local community groups	We will keep you informed.	Regular communications Education materials Technical summaries
Consult	To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions	Residents, businesses, landholders and local community groups	We will keep you informed, listen to and acknowledge concerns and aspirations, and provide feedback on how public input influenced the decision. We will seek your feedback on drafts and proposals.	Community contact points Public information sessions Stakeholder briefings

	IAP2 goal	Community	IAP2 commitment	Techniques
<b>Involve</b>	To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.	Residents, businesses, landholders and local community groups	We will work together with you to formulate solutions and incorporate your advice and recommendations into the decisions to the maximum extent possible.	Community working groups Face-to-face meetings

Adapted from IAP<sup>2</sup> who developed the spectrum to help groups define the public's role in any public participation process. The IAP<sup>2</sup> spectrum is widely considered to be the international standard in the field.

The South Australian Government's [Better Together](#) program has established a set of guiding principles to underpin all engagement with the community. These principles are to:

- Establish a trusted presence in the community and build relationships with stakeholders to support stronger, clearer communications
- Be empathetic and listen to the community's issues and concerns to understand their perceptions and what is important to them
- Be honest and transparent – be clear about what we know, what we don't know, and what we are doing to fill the gap
- Use simple language and graphics to explain the science and technical information
- Develop community understanding of the site contamination assessment or remediation process, timeframes and the review of results as part of a program of community education.
- Honour commitments and conduct all engagement and communication activities with integrity.
- Acknowledge diversity, understand that communities represent a range of interests and points of view, and give consideration to people whose first language is not English.

## 12 Summary

The overall approach of the community engagement plan is to build and strengthen relationships, empathy, awareness and mutual understanding. In order to successfully communicate and engage it is also important to consider the following elements:

- There is no generic approach, and although lessons can be learned from other assessment programs. Each individual program should be tailored to respond to the specific community and level of concern.
- Appropriate resources should be identified to develop the strategies and support delivery, with a focus on staff experienced in managing sensitive community issues and communicating complex technical issues in plain English.
- A collaborative approach between the lead communicator and the EPA should be applied in developing and implementing the strategy to ensure the best outcome for the community, where the EPA is regulating the site contamination assessment. Where the EPA is acting as the lead communicator in the case of 'orphan' sites, it will also follow this guideline and apply the same approach to communication and engagement.

Implementation of a community engagement plan following the process outlined in this guideline will enable the opportunity for positive outcomes to be achieved.



## 13 Interface with other plans and agreements

The Site contamination – interim guideline for communications and engagement also has interfaces with the following other plans:

- *EPA Partnerships and Engagement Framework 2016–18*
- *SA Health Working Together Agreement – 14 October 2015*

Following these documents ensures a consistent approach to managing site contamination communications and engagement across the state.

### FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact:  
Principal Adviser Community Engagement  
Environment Protection Authority  
GPO Box 2607  
Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone: (08) 8204 2004  
Freecall (country): 1800 729 175  
Email: [engage.epa@sa.gov.au](mailto:engage.epa@sa.gov.au)  
Website: [www.epa.sa.gov.au](http://www.epa.sa.gov.au)

For health related information please contact:  
Scientific Services,  
Public Health, SA Health  
11 Hindmarsh Square  
Adelaide SA 5000

Telephone: (08) 8226 7100  
Email: [public.health@health.sa.gov.au](mailto:public.health@health.sa.gov.au)  
Website: [www.sahealth.sa.gov.au](http://www.sahealth.sa.gov.au)



# Appendix 1 Example of a site-specific community engagement plan

## Ground (bore) water contamination community engagement plan

Community engagement plan	
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To communicate with residents [WHERE] that [WHAT IMPACT THIS HAS ON THE COMMUNITY]</li> <li>To advise how the [COMPANY/PERSON/GOVERNMENT/EPA] is going to work with residents, council and other stakeholders</li> <li>To advise that the EPA recommends residents do not use bore water for any purpose.</li> <li>To remind all bore owners that SA Health advises residents to test every two years.</li> <li>To communicate [any recommendations for mitigating exposure].</li> </ul>
Stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Residents in the area of interest/concern</li> <li>Residents in any specific sub-zones that have particular impacts</li> <li>Current CT landholders in the above two areas</li> <li>Councils</li> <li>Community groups, interest groups, local business centres, etc</li> <li>Members of Parliament (State and Federal)</li> <li>EPA</li> <li>Members of the public</li> <li>Highly concerned stakeholders, or anyone that has previously identified with the project</li> <li>Media</li> <li>Local schools in or near the area</li> <li>Local childcare centres in or near the area</li> <li>Auditors</li> <li>Housing SA case managers/regional directors</li> </ul>
Engagement approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tailored letter to residents in the assessment area advising of receipt of the audit report and expected release of the report with a link to the report on the website.</li> <li>Face to face meetings should be held with residents where there is a significant public health risk – this can be referred to in the letter ahead of a phone call to arrange a suitable time or doorknock if no contact details are known.</li> <li>If there is a wider public interest, community information sessions should be held for residents and interested parties to have the opportunity to meet with representatives from the EPA, Council, Appropriate Person liable, Environmental Consultants and any other authority involved in the site contamination assessment or remediation.</li> <li>Media release to <i>The Advertiser/ Messenger</i></li> <li>Website update</li> </ul>

## Community engagement plan

### Key messages

- Groundwater contamination was found [WHERE] and site contamination has been identified and attributed to [FOR EXAMPLE historical industrial use and the inadequate storage of chlorinated hydrocarbons – primarily trichloroethene (TCE) solvents that were used widespread for metal cleaning.]
- Previous practices for the handling, use and disposal of solvents that were acceptable at that time are unacceptable today.
- The [APPROPRIATE PERSON] defined an assessment area which is bordered by [DEFINE LOCATION]
- The [APPROPRIATE PERSON] agreed to commission the offsite assessment work and engaged an environmental consultant to undertake a comprehensive program of assessment and remediation.
- The [APPROPRIATE PERSON] have engaged an independent site contamination auditor to oversee the work.
- [Detail the stage of assessment and any information that can be provided to residents, what they can expect, and what next steps might be]
- [If the conclusion of the assessment, remediation and mitigation is likely to result in the establishment by the EPA of institutional controls such as a Groundwater Prohibition Area (GPA), mention this as early as possible in the communication process].
- Further information is available on [EPA/APPROPRIATE PERSON] website.
- Reminder that SA Health advises all bore owners to test their bores every two years.

Once the above table has been populated with details specific to the site and situation, a detailed action plan can be developed with appropriate timeframes, budget and responsible officer allocations.

## Appendix 2

# Roles and responsibilities for site contamination assessments

Trigger (eg regulatory, guideline, development, or voluntary)	Owner / developer (appropriate person)	Site contamination consultant	Site contamination auditor	Council / planning authority	EPA	SA HEALTH
Assessment	Engages consultant to carry out assessment	Designs and conducts preliminary site investigations site history and can include limited soil sampling and prepares PSI report(s)	Notify EPA of audit commencement (if engaged)	Conduct initial desktop evaluations and require audit report if information provided indicates known or suspected site contamination and a change to a sensitive use proposed on land subject to rezoning / development application	Record information on the Public Register (including website) and notify stakeholders as required (eg owners, councils, consultants, auditors)	
	May engage auditor as/if required (could occur at any stage of process)	If appropriate, designs and conducts detailed site investigations may involve multiple stages	Establishes audit criteria and reviews and provides comments on the design, conduct and results of the assessment and reports	Referral to EPA (or seek non formal advice)	Consider liability and if necessary powers under the EP Act (orders, voluntary proposals)	
	May engage auditor as/if required (could occur at any stage of process)	S83A notification requirements may apply	S83A notification requirements may apply	Provide consent / approval taking into account report outcomes and any conditions / recommendations (may include use of reserved matters and conditions)	If auditor not engaged, will review results of assessment and determine requirements for any further actions	Provide formal advice as requested
	S83A notification requirements may apply	If appropriate, designs and conducts risk assessment may involve multiple stages	Required to notify the EPA of any significant hazardous circumstances (SHC)		If no appropriate person determined to and for sites that are contaminated to public health risk ( orphan site ) then EPA to seek formal advice and request human health risk assessment advice from toxicological expert. EPA to engage consultants to undertake	Provide formal advice and human health risk assessment as requested
Remediation (if required)	If auditor not engaged may be required to engage with EPA (based on results of the assessment)	If appropriate, designs and conducts site remediation and validation and prepares remediation plans and reports	Reviews and provides comments on the design, conduct and results of the remediation plans and reports		If potential public health risk identified (or if SHC notification received) refer to DHA for formal advice (may or may not be subject to audit)	Provide support for community engagement as requested (eg participation at community information events)
Post remediation	Engages consultant to carry out remediation		May issue interim audit advice (IAA) prior to completion of audit	Administrative review of IAA to ensure consistent with EPA guidance	If triggered, engage with local communities impacted by offsite contamination (eg letterbox drop,	
	Carry out validation testing and sampling.		Determines audit outcomes and need for any audit conditions.	Administrative review of SCAR to ensure consistent with EPA guidance.	Record any audit conditions and monitor compliance (as appropriate)	
			Prepare site contamination audit report (SCAR) and complete audit and submit to required persons	Implement institutional controls such as Groundwater Prohibition Area if appropriate (consider SAH advice)	Implement institutional controls such as Groundwater Prohibition Area if appropriate (consider SAH advice)	Provide formal advice as requested