



SITE CONTAMINATION

Voluntary site contamination assessment proposals

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Site contamination exists in most urbanised areas in the world. It is an important environmental, health, economic and planning issue. It and can have implications for land owners and occupiers, developers, councils, planning authorities, government and local communities.

Where site contamination is identified, the Environment Protection Authority (EPA) has powers under the *Environment Protection Act 1993* to require a person to determine the cause and extent of the contamination. The EPA regulates responsible parties to meet their obligations. When applicable, this includes communicating with potentially affected stakeholders such as the neighbouring community.

Voluntary site contamination assessment proposals (VSCAP) and voluntary site remediation proposals (VSRP) are established under sections 103I and 103K of the Act. VSCAPs and VSRPs are commonly termed voluntary proposals.

A voluntary proposal is submitted by an individual or a company to the EPA. The proposal will detail the intended work, set timeframes and establish standards. Once the EPA is satisfied with the voluntary proposal it will agree to it and the proposal will be made publically available through the EPA's Public Register. All subsequent information relating to the proposal will also be made publically available through the Public Register, and can be obtained by contacting the EPA on the number overleaf.

Voluntary proposals are used when:

- a site has been deemed to be of community significance
- an 'orphan site' managed by the EPA where a person has been subsequently identified to be liable for the site contamination
- a site at which the site contamination extends over a large area or is expected to require extensive and/or complex assessment and/or remediation
- a site that has been identified in an area in which there are a number of other complex contamination issues with more than one liable person.
- to ensure that conditions of an audit are adhered to or addressed into the future.
- to ensure that ongoing monitoring or management of a site is administered



Voluntary proposals ensure compliance

The EPA may also elect to use voluntary proposals to bring a non-complying person into compliance without the need to issue an order.

The benefit of voluntary proposals are that they:

- provide the EPA with certainty when managing sites
- provide the community with an increased level of publicly available information; and
- are an effective way to ensure that persons understand their obligations and requirements under the Act.

Voluntary proposals also clearly document to an individual or company what their requirements are in relation to a site. If a person or company has failed to meet a requirement or agreed timeframe the EPA can take regulatory action to require the person or individual to undertake the necessary work.

Regulatory action can include a Site Contamination Assessment Order (SCAO) or a Site Remediation Order (SRO).

When does site contamination become a problem?

In order for site contamination to become a problem for people, there needs to be:

1. a source (for example contaminated groundwater in a bore),
2. a pathway (for example extracting that water with a pump) and
3. a receptor (for example a person then ingesting or coming into contact with that water).

Whether there is a risk to human health also depends on:

- the types of chemicals found,
- the concentrations of the chemicals
- where they are found, and
- how a person is exposed.

FURTHER INFORMATION

For **further information** on site contamination please contact:

Site Contamination Branch
Environment Protection Authority
GPO Box 2607
Adelaide SA 5001

Telephone:
(08) 8204 2004
Freecall (country): 1800 729 175

Email:
EPASiteContam@sa.gov.au

Website:
www.epa.sa.gov.au

For **health** related information on site contamination please contact:

Scientific Services Branch,
Public Health Services, SA Health
11 Hindmarsh Square
Adelaide SA 5000

Telephone:
(08) 8226 7100

Email:
public.health@health.sa.gov.au

Website:
www.sahealth.sa.gov.au

