

Saskatchewan Adopts National Classification System for Contaminated Sites

New Requirements as of February 15, 2010



The Ministry of Environment is starting to track and prioritize contaminated sites in Saskatchewan. To this end, the ministry has adopted the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment's (CCME) National Classification System for Contaminated Sites¹ (NCSCS). Information gathered according to the NCSCS will contribute to a new Saskatchewan data base that will be used to identify, track and prioritize impacted sites.

The NCSCS was developed to establish a rational and scientifically defensible system for comparable assessment of impacted (contaminated) sites across Canada. It is a method for evaluating impacted sites according to their current or potential adverse effect on human health and the environment. It is not intended to be used as a quantitative risk assessment tool; rather, it is system to prioritize further action at impacted sites. It has been an important management tool for prioritizing the investigation and remediation of contaminated sites since 1992.

New Requirements

For proponents wishing ministry review and comment on any impacted site, the NCSCS score sheets are essential before Ministry of Environment staff conduct the review.

As of February 15, 2010, all site assessments, monitoring reports and corrective action plans submitted to the Saskatchewan Ministry of Environment must be accompanied by a hard copy of the NCSCS summary score sheet.

This new requirement was communicated to Saskatchewan stakeholders during information sessions in 2009. Many proponents are already voluntarily submitting their NCSCS score sheets to the ministry.

The NCSCS will also serve as a quality assurance and control tool to ensure requisite information is submitted to the ministry. EPB #424 Jan/10

You may download the latest version of the National Classification System for Contaminated Sites PN 1403 from the Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment website:

http://www.ccme.ca/assets/xls/ncscs_1.0_e.xls

http://www.ccme.ca/assets/pdf/pn_1403_ncscs_guidance_e.pdf

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¹ CCME. 2008. National Classification System for Contaminated Sites: Guidance Document. Canadian Council of Ministers of the Environment, Winnipeg.

Background

The National Classification System for Contaminated Sites evaluates impacted sites by examining the known and potential sources, pathways and human and ecological receptors.

The general process to use the National Classification System for Contaminated Sites is:

1. Read and understand the Guidance Document and the User's Guide.
2. Obtain sufficient site information to complete the site classification. At least a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) should be available in order to conduct the National Classification System for Contaminated Sites exercise. The Phase I ESA consists of a preliminary desk-top type study involving nonintrusive data collection to determine whether there is a potential for the site to be contaminated and to provide information to direct any intrusive investigations.

The data collected as part of the Phase I ESA generally include a review of available information on current site conditions, a history of the property, a site inspection and interviews with personnel familiar with the site. This stage is similar to "*Phase I: Site Information Assessment*" as described in Guidance Document on the Management of Contaminated Sites in Canada (CCME 1997). If a Phase I ESA is not available, further site information should be gathered before the site is classified. It may be necessary to complete a Phase I ESA for the site in conjunction with the NCSCS scoring exercise.

3. Refer to the Pre-Screening Checklist to determine if the site is appropriate for classification or has site-specific indicators that would default the site to Class 1 priority ranking.
4. Complete the Worksheets (review and document existing information and consult specialists as required). It is recommended to document the rationale for the scoring decisions.
5. Complete the Summary Score sheet.
6. Classify the Site.

The proponent will be required to gather more site information and re-submit, if the uncertainty percentage (the ratio of "Known" to "Potential") is greater than 15%.

At this time, the ministry only requires a hardcopy of the summary score sheet. It is expected that the proponent will have and make available electronic versions of the site summary, prescreening and worksheets upon request.

For more information, contact:

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