The Site Information Request Process

The ministry has a wealth of information in its electronic and paper records on contaminated sites. This information is often needed by persons engaged in land transactions as part of the due diligence search process.

Records can be accessed in three different ways:

- A BC OnLine client can search the Site Registry for electronic records for specific sites (least cost).
- Ministry staff, at the request of an individual, can search electronic and paper records for specific sites (more expensive).
- An individual can make a formal request for records under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (low cost, but with very limited availability for contaminated sites information).

What is the Site Registry?

The Site Registry documents milestones in the cleanup process of a site. The Registry contains information on sites that have been investigated and cleaned up in BC since 1988 (when the ministry began recording this activity) – private as well as provincial Crown lands. All of the information is accessible to the public.

The Site Registry is *not* solely for contaminated sites. Some sites in the Registry are contaminated, but most are simply being investigated and require little, if any, cleanup or they have already been cleaned up to government standards.

Client search of Site Registry on BC OnLine

We recommend that clients search the Site Registry themselves. It can be accessed through BC OnLine, and users are required to establish an account before they carry out their first search.

The Site Registry User's Guide (available on the BC OnLine web site) provides an overview and other general information. First-time Site Registry users are urged to familiarize themselves with the guide.

Types of Site Registry search results

When the Site Registry is searched, it produces an Index Results list, showing all the sites on the system matching the search criteria. You can choose to view a Synopsis Report or a Detail Report for each site in the Index Results list.

A Synopsis Report includes:
- the site's approximate latitude and longitude (if available);
- the regional office ministry file number;
- the Victoria office ministry file number;
- the date to which information in the site record is current;
- the site's fee category;
- the site's address, city, province, and postal code;
- "count" fields showing how many associated items are in the Detail Report;
- the site's status within the ministry; and
- if a site profile exists, pertinent sections from the most recent complete site profile.

A Detail Report includes everything in the Synopsis Report plus details of all associated items such as notations, documents, site associations, site participants, suspected land uses, and parcel descriptions.

Ministry-conducted searches

Ministry staff can help you:
- search the Site Registry,
- prepare a custom report of Site Registry information,
- search other ministry databases, and
- provide copies of site-related paper records.

To request one or more of these services, you first need to complete a Site Information Request and/or File Contents Retrieval application. They are available under "Forms" on our Land Remediation Section web site. Please allow 2 – 4 weeks for the ministry to process your application.

Fees for these services are listed on the application forms and in Schedule 3 of the Contaminated Sites Regulation.

If you have questions regarding the services listed above or the associated application forms, please contact the Site Information Advisor at Advisor.Siteinformation@gov.bc.ca.

Instructions for completing a Site Information Request application

The following provides detailed instructions for completing the Site Information Request Application Form.

Section I – Applicant's Information

Fill out:
- applicant's name, organization (if applicable) and address

- telephone, fax number, and email address (if applicable)

For example, if a developer needed a list of all the sites in Kamloops on the Site Registry, obtaining such information could be costly if multiple area-based searches were used. Instead, the custom searches and existing reports above would save time and money. When you request a custom search, be sure to describe the details of the items you want in your report.

Section II – Environmental Protection Database Searches

The Site Registry does not contain all of the ministry's information on specific sites. Other databases have information on sites where, for example, hazardous wastes have been managed or waste discharges have occurred.

A thorough due diligence search for a site will also scan databases such as:

- SWIS – Special Waste Information System, Hazardous Waste Regulation (generator registrations, transport licences, and transport manifests)
- AMS – *Environmental Management Act* (permits, approval, orders, and regulated sites)
- COORS – Conservation Office On-line Reporting System (convictions under the *Environmental Management Act*).

If you want information for a site from other databases, check off the appropriate boxes and fill in the address or location of the site, as well as the name of the company in question.

> **Caution:** These databases may have information on specific companies, but not for all sites associated with those companies.

Section III – Site Registry Search

Finding a site on the Site Registry can involve using one or more of the following types of queries. Choose the searches you want from the list in Section II of the application. We recommend that you provide at least two types of search parameters to increase the likelihood that the site you are interested in will be found. Please note that if you have already carried out your own Site Registry search on BC OnLine, you do not need ministry staff to repeat it, unless you are unsure of the results you obtained. The price of each query type is shown on the second page of the application form.

Land Titles PID query

Fill in the nine-digit Land Titles PID (parcel identifier number). Land on the Site Registry is not restricted solely to legally titled property, so PIDs are not available for all site records.

When a site PID changes because of subdivision or consolidation of land, modifications are made on the Site Registry. The new PID numbers should be used for the search.

> **Note:** PIDs are maintained by the Land Title Office, not by the ministry. Through BC OnLine, you can use both the Land Title System and the BC Assessment System to identify PID numbers.

Civic Address query

Fill in the complete address of the site you are querying. The address search lets you query an address and a city. In the address field, print the property's address, including the city and municipality in that area.

> **Note:** If you are unsure of an address, you think it could be spelled in different ways, or if you have trouble locating a property, you can widen a query by using asterisks as "wild cards" to signify "anything." For example, if you enter *Front*, the Site Registry will list all addresses containing that word. In this example, the first asterisk stands for all street numbers; the second asterisk stands for all variations of street, avenue, etc.

Crown Lands PIN query

Fill in the seven-digit PIN (property identification number). The Crown Land PIN query is a good way to search for information on a site if the property is not currently in private ownership and is on the Crown Lands Registry Information System (CLARIS).

> **Note:** A Crown land area defined by a PIN may be associated with more than one site; a site may be associated with more than one PIN; and a site may be associated with other sites.

Crown Lands File query

Fill in the seven-digit Crown Lands file number. This query is a good way to search for information on a site for Crown land that has not yet been assigned a Crown Lands PIN.

> **Note:** A Crown land area may be associated with more than one site; a site may be associated with more than one Crown land area; and a site may also be associated with other sites.

Site ID query

Fill in the ministry's Site ID number. This type of query is the best way to search for information on a site, because every site on the Site Registry has its own unique Site ID number.

> **Note:** A site may be associated with other sites. While associated sites will not appear in an Index Results list, they will appear in a Detail Report.

Latitude/Longitude query

This search method lets you look for information on sites around a specific point of latitude and longitude. You have two search options: by small area (0.5 km radius); or by large area (5.0 km radius). The success of this search depends on whether or not the site records contain longitude and latitude information.

Keep in mind the following:
- Records of sites on Crown land usually contain latitude and longitude information.
- Records of sites on legally titled property that have proceeded beyond the screening stage will usually have latitude and longitude data.
- Records of sites on legally titled property that have not proceeded beyond the screening stage of the site assessment process might not contain latitude and longitude information.

All records that contain latitudes and longitudes within the specified range will be included in the Index Results list. Note that BC OnLine also offers an area search based on postal code. It will identify sites within a smaller radius in urban areas compared with the radius for postal code searches for rural areas.

> **Caution:** Latitude and longitude coordinates in Site Registry records are often provided by third-party sources and are not guaranteed to be accurate. Sites that contain inaccurate latitude and longitude information might not be picked up by this search method.

Synopsis and Detail Reports
Once ministry staff have identified the sites you are interested in based on the searches you requested, you might want to have a Synopsis Report (less expensive) or Detail Report (more expensive) printed for each site. Check off the type of report you would like to receive.

Section IV – Custom Site Registry Searches
In some situations, a client might want information on a large number of sites, or to do a search for sites based on different search criteria from those offered by BC OnLine. If this is the case, when you fill out a Site Information Request Application Form, be sure to attach details of the type of custom information and reports that you want. Normally our staff will contact you to discuss the details of your request.

There are two options for these searches:
a) a custom report of computer-based Site Registry information prepared by the Site Registrar; and
b) an updated custom report regularly provided by the Site Registrar.

Section V – Fees
This section lists the types of queries and other services available and the cost of each. Note that there is a variable fee for obtaining the Index Results list, regardless of the number of records found; and that GST is charged, but not provincial sales tax (PST).

Example 1: Environment Site ID query

Results – 1 site in Index Results list	$10.00
1 Detail Report requested	$50.00
Government surcharge	$10.00
GST	$4.90
Total fee	$74.90

Example 2: Address query on *Granville* Vancouver

Results – 5 sites in Index Results list		$50.00
2 Detail Reports requested	2 x $50 =	$100.00
Government surcharge		$10.00
GST		$11.20
Total fee		$171.20

Example 3: Small area query

Results – 3 sites in Index Results list		$50.00
3 Synopsis Reports	3 x $25 =	$75.00
1 Detail Report		$50.00
Government surcharge		$10.00
GST		$12.95
Total fee		$197.95

Example 4: Other database search

1 SWIS – 2 sites	2 x $100 =	$200.00
1 COORS – 1 site		$100.00
GST		$21.00
Total fee		$321.00

File Contents Retrieval

To request copies of reports, correspondence, certificates, and other records on file with the ministry for a site, you must have had a Site Registry search done before and therefore have a Site ID number or a ministry file number. Fill this information in on the File Contents Retrieval application and clearly print the name of the document (or documents) you are requesting. Alternately, you can attach a list of the documents.

Freedom of Information Requests

Provincial freedom of information legislation does not replace the procedures described here for accessing contaminated sites information, nor does it limit access to such information normally available to the public under the *Environmental Management Act*. Requests to the ministry for contaminated sites information will normally be processed as applications for Site Registry searches or Site Information Requests.

Note: This guidance document does not replace the Environmental Management Act *or its regulations. It does not list all provisions relating to contaminated sites services. If there are differences or omissions in this document, the Act and regulations apply.*

For more information, contact the Site Information Advisor at Advisor.Siteinformation@gov.bc.ca