

## Background Soil Quality Database

The ministry has collected background soil quality data for selected metals from all of its eight administrative regions (Cariboo, Kootenay, Lower Mainland, Omineca-Peace, Skeena, Southern Interior, Vancouver Island, and Vancouver). This data has been used in the adjustment of contaminated site soil quality standards in the Contaminated Sites Regulation (the Regulation) and in the calculation of regional background soil quality estimates for use under the Regulation.

The ministry has also undertaken additional background sampling in the Greater Vancouver area, in recognition of the highly active redevelopment of commercial and industrial property there.

Further information regarding how these background estimates may be used can be found in [Protocol 4, "Determining Background Soil Quality."](#)

### **What data is available?**

The 2001 provincial background soil estimates were based on results generated by an Aqua Regia digestion. Since then, the ministry's preferred method has changed to the Strong Acid Leachable Metals (SALM) digestion. Previously collected soil samples were reanalysed using SALM.

The ministry's SALM background soil quality database contains the following information:

- detailed information on background sampling site locations and soil description organized by region;
- analytical results for metals using SALM;
- analytical results for miscellaneous parameters (e.g. particle size and distribution, organic content, pH, conductance, chloride, fluoride, phosphate, sulfate, organic carbon, nitrates, and nitrogen); and
- analytical results for organic analyses of pesticides, herbicides, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons, and chlorinated phenols.

### **How do I find the soil quality information I need for a specific ministry region?**

The SALM data for all eight regions are compiled in an Excel workbook:

#### [SALM data set](#)

Regional Aqua Regia data is also available from the Ministry upon request.

*For more information, please direct inquiries to [site@gov.bc.ca](mailto:site@gov.bc.ca)*