

Guidance for a Stage 1 Preliminary Site Investigation

Sections 58 and 59 of the Contaminated Sites Regulation (CSR) outline the requirements for preliminary and detailed site investigations. Investigators carry out a preliminary site investigation (PSI) in two stages, and the detailed site investigation (DSI) builds on the findings of the PSI. This document covers Stage 1 PSI, and guidance on Stage 2 PSI and DSI is found in [Technical Guidance 11](#).

The Stage 1 PSI is a desktop historical study that is used to determine the likelihood that current or previous site operation may have contaminated the site. If potential contamination is determined, the Areas of Potential Environmental Concern (APEC) and Potential Contaminants of Concern (PCOC) must be identified. It is expected that investigation will proceed to a Stage 2 PSI if the findings from a Stage 1 PSI identify APECs and PCOCs. Pursuant to section 49 of the CSR, a person seeking a certificate of compliance must complete a PSI and DSI.

This guidance document provides a summary of the general types of information expected in the first stage as required by the Ministry. The information gathered from a Stage 1 PSI (along with Stage 2 PSI and DSI) will contribute to the completion of a [Summary of Site Condition](#).

Activities required in the first stage of a preliminary site investigation:

- a review of site historical use and records, including a search of the Site Registry, to determine current and past activities or uses, accidents and spills, and practices and management relating to potential contamination at the site and adjacent sites;
- one or more site reconnaissance visits with visual inspection of buildings, property, equipment, land, surface water, and biota for indicators or presence of contamination;
- interviews with current or former owners, occupants, neighbours, managers, employees, and government officials who can, with reasonable attempts, be contacted respecting information on activities that may have caused contamination;
- any information as to which substances on the site may cause contamination; and
- activities as described in protocols established by a director in accordance with section 64 of the *Environmental Management Act*.

Sampling relevant environmental media and investigations of subsurface conditions are not required at this stage.

Stage 1 PSI Guidance Checklist

The Stage 1 PSI guidance checklist highlights the important features of a good first stage

preliminary site investigation. This should be considered as guidance only. Some features are legally required, but not all are relevant in all cases. Environmental consultants and others using the attached checklist when conducting and reviewing preliminary site investigations should also consider site-specific factors and the usefulness of information provided in the preliminary site investigation. The “Reference” column of the checklist references any relevant documents. The “Applicability” column should be reviewed to ensure all appropriate information is included.



PSI 1 Guidance
Checklist

Please note that the checklist is a dynamic document that is modified on the basis of input received. We welcome comments on suggested improvements to format and contents and we will continue to work to provide a document that is relevant to users.

Disclaimer

This checklist does not replace the *Environmental Management Act* or its regulations. It does not list all provisions relating to preliminary site investigations. If there are differences or omissions in this document, the Act and regulations apply.

For more information, contact the Environmental Emergencies and Land Remediation Branch at site@gov.bc.ca