

Background Concentrations in Soil Database

The Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy (the ministry) has collected background concentrations in soil for selected metals from all of its former eight administrative regions (Cariboo, Kootenay, Lower Mainland, Omineca-Peace, Skeena, Southern Interior, Vancouver Island, and Vancouver). These data have been used in the adjustment of contaminated sites soil standards in the [Contaminated Sites Regulation](#) (the Regulation) and in the calculation of regional estimates of background concentrations in soil for use under the Regulation.

The ministry has also undertaken additional background sampling in the Metro Vancouver area, in recognition of the high rate of redevelopment of commercial and industrial properties in that region.

Further information regarding how these estimates of background concentrations in soil may be used can be found in [Protocol 4, "Establishing Background Concentrations in Soil."](#)

What data is available?

The 2001 provincial estimates of background concentrations in soil 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 concentrations in soil 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 information I need for a specific region?

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

[SALM data set](#)

Detailed information on sites, analytical results for miscellaneous and organic parameters as well as regional Aqua Regia analytical data are available from the ministry upon request.

For more information, please direct inquiries to site@gov.bc.ca

Revision History

Approval Date	Effective Date	Document Version	Notes
	Feb. 2016		
	Nov. 2017		