

Environmental Site Assessment FAQs

for Planning & Development Reviews



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WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO KNOW THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION OF THE SITE?

City of Medicine Hat (the City): The City has a duty of care to ensure that the environmental condition of the land is suitable for the proposed development and intended future land use.

Developer: It is in the developer's best interest to identify all potential land use limitations of a site, including understanding the environmental condition, prior to development to avoid unknown costs, liabilities, and timing constraints.

WHAT IS AN APPLICANT'S OR DEVELOPER'S ROLE IN ASSESSING THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION OF A SITE?

It is the responsibility of the applicant and/or developer to provide the City with the information needed to understand the environmental condition of the site. This includes submitting all previous environmental site assessment information completed on the site, as well as completing the City's **Environmental Status Statement** to the best of their knowledge.

If further information is requested by the City, the applicant/developer then has the responsibility of completing and submitting any requested additional environmental investigation information. Any additional investigations will need to be completed by a qualified environmental professional that meets Alberta Environment and Protected Areas sign off standard. It is important that the applicant/developer provides the environmental professional with a written statement which describes the purpose and objective of any assessments to be completed on the property and the intended use of the reports.

The developer can request a pre-application meeting with the City's Environmental Specialists to address questions and/or concerns throughout this process.

WHAT IS THE CITY'S ROLE IN ASSESSING THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION OF A SITE?

The City's Environmental Specialists will complete an internal environmental screening of the proposed development and review the Environmental Status Statement submitted by the developer. The screening process is as follows:

1. Review public, historical and available information pertaining to the environmental condition of the site.
2. Request additional environmental site assessment information (e.g., Phase 1 & Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessments) needed to understand the suitability of the site for the proposed development.
3. Based on the available information, determine if the site is suitable for the intended use and proposed development.

HOW IS THE ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITION OF A SITE DETERMINED?

The environmental condition of a site is generally determined by completing Environmental Site Assessments (ESAs) and/or Biophysical Assessments. ESAs are conducted to address potential contamination issues and are typically done in phases.

PHASE 1 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT:

An investigation of the property and its surrounding properties, evaluating their current and historical land use and identifying areas of potential environmental concern. A Phase 1 ESA involves the following components at minimum: **1) Records review 2) Interviews 3) Site Visit 4) Evaluation of Findings 5) Conclusion.**

All Phase 1 ESAs submitted to the City should be completed in accordance with the Canadian Standards Association *CSA Z768-01 Phase 1 Environmental Site Assessment* (CSA, 2001) and the Alberta Environmental Site Assessment Standard (GOA, 2016).

The Phase 1 ESA must provide concise conclusions and recommendations which should indicate whether additional investigation is required and clearly outline any areas of potential environmental concern that are associated with the site and the proposed development.

The process of a Phase 1 ESA takes approximately 6-8 weeks.

PHASE 2 ENVIRONMENTAL SITE ASSESSMENT:

An intrusive investigation and confirmation of areas of environmental concern through characterization and laboratory analysis of soil and groundwater. A Phase 2 involves the following components at minimum:

1) Site Characterization 2) Sampling and Analysis 3) Findings 4) Conclusion.

All Phase 2 ESAs submitted to the City should be completed in accordance with the Canadian Standards Association *CSA Z769-01 Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment* (CSA, 2001) and the Government of Alberta's *Phase 2 Environmental Site Assessment Checklist* (GOA, 2013).

The conclusion of a Phase 2 ESA should include sufficient information to support either:

1) that there is no reasonable basis to suspect a substance release or **2)** confirmation that a substance release has occurred and remedial measures and/or risks management should be taken.

The process of a Phase 2 ESA investigation and technical report takes approximately 3-6 months.

Following the results of the Phase 2 ESA, remedial or risk management may be requested prior to proceeding with development.