

Land Contamination – Information Sheet for Environmental Consultants

What assessment criteria should I use?

All reports submitted in connection with a planning application must refer to the latest guidance and the most up to date soil guideline values. Reports will be rejected if they refer to withdrawn guideline values.

Reports can use alternative assessment criteria provided they have used robust scientific data and have been derived using a UK relevant risk assessment model such as the current version of CLEA.

What should soil being imported to site be tested for?

Any soil imported onto the development site from an outside source must be suitable for use. Also, soil from elsewhere on the development site which is proposed for use as part of a cover system or landscaping must be suitable for use and will be subject to the same requirements as imported material.

Where it is proposed to import soil onto site in connection with the development, this should be tested at source to establish whether it is suitable as a clean cover. It may also be possible to test the material once it has arrived at site without testing at source. However, this is not advised, and it is recommended you discuss this with the Contaminated Land Officer. Any material brought to site without being tested at source will be done so at the risk of the developer. If the material fails the testing criteria and proved not to be suitable for use on site, it will need to be removed.

The soil being tested for contamination should be analysed in a laboratory that is accredited under the MCERTS Chemical Testing of Soil Scheme, for all chemical parameters requested, and the results submitted to our Contaminated Land Officer for consideration.

As a minimum, the following determinants and parameters should be tested:

arsenic, cadmium, chromium, copper, lead, mercury, nickel, selenium, zinc, cyanide, phenol, sulphate, sulphide, pH, speciated Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs) and carbon-banded Total Petroleum Hydrocarbons (TPHs).

Vendor certificates of the physical and nutrient properties of the matrix are not accepted in place of actual in situ sampling of the soil for the appropriate physico-chemical properties.

How many samples should be taken when sampling material to be imported to site?

We will accept the sampling at a ratio of one sample for every 100 m³ (approximately 150 tons) of material imported from a 'greenfield' source or one sample for every 50 m³ for material from an unknown or potentially contaminated source. A minimum of three samples must be tested.

An alternative sampling frequency will be considered if supported by appropriate justification, conceptual site model or a risk assessment.

Additional reference material

- Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites – Code of Practice. British Standard 10175:2011+A2:2017
- Land Contamination Risk Management Environment Agency (2020)
- Guiding Principles for Land Contamination Environment Agency (2011)
- Guidance for the safe development of housing on land affected by contamination R&D 66:2008 NHBC, Environment Agency & CIEH (2008)
- Cover Systems for Land Regeneration BRE (2004)

For more information or to discuss any concerns relating to a site, please contact:

03450 450 063 or email env.health@scambs.gov.uk