



Cal/EPA

◆ Groundwater Protection ◆



**INTERIM  
SITE ASSESSMENT &  
CLEANUP GUIDEBOOK**

May 1996  
California Regional Water Quality  
Control Board  
Los Angeles and Ventura Counties  
Region 4



**PREVENTING GROUNDWATER  
POLLUTION:  
ASSESSING YOUR SITE FOR  
CHEMICAL CONTAMINANTS**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY of CLEANUP GUIDEBOOK**

In December 1994, the staff of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, assisted by its Technical Review Committee, developed an Interim Site Assessment and Cleanup Guidebook to serve the regulated community in the Region.

The guidebook offers a new approach to the site cleanup process: one that reduces time, cuts costs, and establishes a defined endpoint for investigations and cleanup actions. Formerly, the process involved case-by-case decisions on a site-by-site basis, a process that took too long, cost too much, and had an uncertain outcome. Concerns expressed by property owners, consultants, attorneys, lenders' real estate brokers, insurance companies and others led the Board to reexamine and reinvent its procedures.

Specifically, the guidebook:

- identifies the role of the involved agencies and their oversight responsibilities to help avoid confusion and duplication.
- streamlines the investigation and cleanup process and offers a standard approach to developing work plans.
- expedites the review and decision-making process throughout all of the Regional Board's groundwater protection programs.
- answers the questions "How clean is clean?" for both petroleum and solvent impacted sites.
- defines investigation endpoints and criteria for issuing a "no further action" determination by the Board.
- is "user friendly" and "service oriented" to promote a better understanding of the assessment and cleanup process, foster cooperation among all parties involved in a site, and accelerates cleanup of contaminated sites to the benefit of both the environment and the local economy.

Scattered among the Board's well investigation, underground tanks, site cleanup, and other programs are over 3,500 site assessment and cleanup cases which will benefit from this guidebook. For example, the guidebook will make it easier for a property owner, a prospective buyer, or lender to predict the estimated cost of cleanup.

Using the procedures and standards contained in the guidebook owners will know ahead of time what level of cleanup must be achieved to obtain closure from the Board and at what cost. A gas station owner or consultant now has in one document the tools to determine the extent of the problem, clean up the contamination, and obtain closure, often with less oversight by Regional Board staff along the way.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
List of Figures and Tables .....	vi
Foreword .....	viii
Acknowledgments .....	ix

### SECTION I: ASSESSMENT AND CLEANUP

#### Chapter 1.0 Introduction

California State and Regional Water Boards .....	1-1
The Need for a Guidebook .....	1-1
Purpose of the Guidebook .....	1-4
Protection of Water Quality .....	1-5
Programs .....	1-6
San Gabriel and San Fernando Valleys Cleanup Program .....	1-8
Underground Storage Tanks (UST) .....	1-9
Spills, Leaks, Investigation and Cleanup (SLIC) .....	1-10
U.S. Departments of Defense (DoD) and Energy (DoE) .....	1-11
Aboveground Petroleum Storage Tanks (AGST) .....	1-12
Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) .....	1-13
Landfills .....	1-14
Subsurface Investigations .....	1-15

## TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)

	Page
<b>Chapter 2.0 Overview of the Assessment and Cleanup Progress</b>	
Cleanup Goals .....	2-1
General Report Requirements .....	2-1
Monitoring Well Permit Requirements .....	2-2
Waste Discharge Requirements .....	2-4
Other Agencies' Requirements .....	2-6
Summary of the Process .....	2-6
Initial Site Evaluation .....	2-6
Soil and Groundwater Assessment .....	2-7
Corrective Action Plan .....	2-8
Verification Monitoring Data and Closure Report .....	2-9
Guidance for Remediation of Soils: Soil Screening Levels .....	2-10
Cleanup Performance Criteria .....	2-11
"No Further Action" (NFA) Determinations .....	2-12
Conflict Resolution Process .....	2-12
<b>Chapter 3.0 Assessment and Cleanup Guidance</b>	
Initial Site Evaluation .....	3-1
Step 1: Locate and Identify Potential Sources .....	3-1
Step 2: Confirm Discharge(s) .....	3-2
Step 3: Submit Initial Findings .....	3-2

**TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Chapter 3.0 Assessment and Cleanup Guidance (continued)</b>	
<b>Soil and Groundwater Assessment</b> .....	<b>3-4</b>
<b>Step 1: Submit Work Plan</b> .....	<b>3-4</b>
<b>Step 2: Define Extent of Soil Contamination</b> .....	<b>3-5</b>
<b>Step 3: Determine Groundwater Impact</b> .....	<b>3-5</b>
<b>Step 4: Submit Results</b> .....	<b>3-7</b>
<b>Corrective Action for Soil</b> .....	<b>3-8</b>
<b>Step 1: Determine need for Soil Cleanup</b> .....	<b>3-8</b>
<b>Step 2: Determine Soil Cleanup Options</b> .....	<b>3-9</b>
<b>Step 3: Prepare and Submit Corrective Action Plan</b> .....	<b>3-9</b>
<b>Step 4: Complete Soil Cleanup</b> .....	<b>3-11</b>
<b>Corrective Action for Groundwater</b> .....	<b>3-11</b>
<b>Step 1: Determine need for Groundwater Cleanup</b> .....	<b>3-11</b>
<b>Step 2: Determine Groundwater Treatment Options</b> .....	<b>3-11</b>
<b>Step 3: Prepare and Submit Corrective Action Plan</b> .....	<b>3-14</b>
<b>Step 4: Complete Groundwater Cleanup</b> .....	<b>3-14</b>
<b>Closure Report and Verification Monitoring Data</b> .....	<b>3-14</b>

**SECTION II: REMEDIATION GUIDANCE FOR PETROLEUM AND VOC IMPACTED SITES**

**Chapter 4.0 Guidance for Petroleum-Impacted Sites**

<b>Summary</b> .....	<b>4-1</b>
<b>Background</b> .....	<b>4-1</b>
<b>Objective</b> .....	<b>4-2</b>
<b>Procedures</b> .....	<b>4-3</b>
<b>Examples</b> .....	<b>4-5</b>

**TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>SECTION II: REMEDIATION GUIDANCE FOR PETROLEUM AND VOC IMPACTED SITES (continued)</b>	

**Chapter 4.0 Guidance for Petroleum-Impacted Sites (continued)**

<b>Closure Criteria for Low Risk Fuel Contamination Sites .....</b>	<b>4-8</b>
<b>Background .....</b>	<b>4-8</b>
<b>Use of Passive Bioremediation at Low Risk Sites .....</b>	<b>4-8</b>
<b>How to Apply Low Risk Criteria to a Fuel Contaminated Site .....</b>	<b>4-9</b>
<b>What can a Responsible Party do to Expedite Review of a Low Risk Case? .....</b>	<b>4-10</b>

**Chapter 5.0 Guidance for VOC-Impacted Sites**

<b>Summary .....</b>	<b>5-1</b>
<b>Background .....</b>	<b>5-1</b>
<b>Cleanup Guidance .....</b>	<b>5-2</b>
<b>Vadose Zones Above Drinking Water Aquifers .....</b>	<b>5-2</b>
<b>Vadose Zones Above NonDrinking Water Aquifers .....</b>	<b>5-6</b>
<b>Example .....</b>	<b>5-7</b>

**GLOSSARY**

**REFERENCES**

**TABLE OF CONTENTS (continued)**

**APPENDICES**

**Appendix A** ..... **Attenuation Factor Method for VOCs**

**Appendix B** ..... **General Requirements for Site Investigations**

**Appendix C** ... **Interim Guidance for Active Soil Gas Investigations**

**Appendix D** ..... **Examples of NFA Letters**

**Appendix E** ..... **State Board Policies and Procedures**

## LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

	Page
Figure 1-1: Organizational Chart .....	1-2
Figure 1-2: Map of the Region .....	1-3
Figure 2-1: Monitoring Well .....	2-1
Figure 2-2: Initial Site Evaluation .....	2-7
Figure 2-3: Soil Assessment .....	2-7
Figure 2-4: Groundwater Assessment .....	2-8
Figure 2-5: Relationship Between Concentration Reduction and Contaminant Mass Removal .....	2-11
Figure 3-1: Typical Soil Vapor Extraction System .....	3-10
Table 1-1: Regional Board Functions and Programs .....	1-7
Table 2-1: Permitting Agencies .....	2-3
Table 2-2: Collaborating Agencies .....	2-5
Table 2-3: "No Further Actions" (NFA) Determination Scenarios .....	2-14
Table 3-1: Methods Used to Confirm Discharges to Soil .....	3-3
Table 3-2: Initial Site Evaluation .....	3-4
Table 3-3: Complete Soil Assessment .....	3-5
Table 3-4: Groundwater Assessment .....	3-6
Table 3-5: Soil and Groundwater Assessment .....	3-7
Table 3-6: Soil Cleanup .....	3-9
Table 3-7: Soil Cleanup Options .....	3-10



**LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES (continued)**

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Table 3-8: Groundwater Cleanup/Monitoring .....</b>	<b>3-12</b>
<b>Table 3-9: Treatment Options for Groundwater Cleanup .....</b>	<b>3-13</b>
<b>Table 4-1: Soil Screening Levels: Petroleum Impacted Sites .....</b>	<b>4-7</b>
<b>Table 5-1: Attenuation Factors for Different Depth and Lithology .....</b>	<b>5-7</b>

## FOREWORD

This guidebook has been prepared in response to a recommendation contained in the 1993 Final Report of the Regional Board's Water Quality Advisory Task Force. During its deliberations, the Task Force heard numerous comments from the regulated community that the site assessment and cleanup process was slow, confusing and seemingly never ending. In response to those concerns, this guidebook provides in layman's terms a clear picture of the goals, procedures, and requirements associated with the site assessment and cleanup process. The appendixes contain supporting documents and detailed information that are intended to assist a responsible party in complying with the Regional Board's requirements.

This guidebook is consistent with the applicable provisions of governing statutes, regulations and State Board policies. However, it is the Regional Board's intent to make this a dynamic document that will improve with age. Comments and suggestions for making it more "user friendly" are welcomed and encouraged. Board staff plans to distribute the guidebook to a broad audience and to incorporate constructive comments into future revisions.

Written comments regarding the guidebook should be sent to:

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