

Alberta's Environmental Site Assessment Standard – New Guidance For Consultants and Property Owners

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On March 1, 2016, the Government of Alberta published a guideline about the minimum requirements for environmental site assessments (“ESAs”) in the province. This guideline, titled the Alberta Environmental Site Assessment Standard (the “ESA Standard”), sets out what should be included in Phase I ESAs and Phase II ESAs in Alberta.¹

Alberta’s primary environmental statutes are the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*² and the *Water Act*.³ Guidance about management of contaminated sites pursuant to the Acts is found in Alberta’s Contaminated Sites Policy Framework.⁴

The new ESA Standard provides guidance to environmental consultants and property owners about the minimum components that the Government of Alberta expects to see in ESAs.

The ESA Standard provides guidance about the minimum requirements for Phase I ESAs, including:

- ◆ scope of the Phase I ESAs
- ◆ records to be reviewed
- ◆ site visit(s)
- ◆ interview(s), and
- ◆ reporting.⁵

¹ Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP), 2016. *Alberta Environmental Site Assessment Standard*.

² RSA 2000, c E-12.

³ RSA 2000, c W-3.

⁴ Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development (ESRD), 2014. *Contaminated Sites Policy Framework*. Land and Forestry Policy Branch, Policy Division.

⁵ *Alberta Environmental Site Assessment Standard*, supra note 1, part 3.0.

Likewise, the ESA Standard provides guidance about the minimum requirements for Phase II ESAs, including:

- ◆ scope of Phase II ESAs
- ◆ media sampling
- ◆ field methodologies and investigation tools
- ◆ sampling rationale and design
- ◆ laboratory analysis
- ◆ quality assurance/quality control, and
- ◆ data validation and interpretation.⁶

The ESA Standard is broadly written and does not make site-specific conclusions. Where an individual is commissioning an ESA, he or she should ensure that the professional responsible for conducting the ESA applies the ESA Standard and evaluates site-specific circumstances.

The ESA Standard has not yet been codified into law by regulation. For now, the ESA Standard is a guidance document.

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⁶ *Ibid*, part 4.0.