

Environmental News

FOR THE STAFF & CLIENTS OF PHH ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITED

FAST, A NEW APPROACH TO PRE-PURCHASE SITE ASSESSMENTS

By Craig Robertson, M.Sc., P.Geol.

Clients requiring a due diligence environmental site assessment for the purchase of property have approached PHH with a need for a fast and accurate method of determining potential environmental liability. Until now the only acceptable assessment method has been a standard Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) based on CSA or CMHC protocols. It can take two weeks or longer to receive responses from regulatory authorities and produce a complete Phase I report. Sometimes, the prospective purchaser doesn't have that much time to complete a deal.

To allow for a quick turnaround on due diligence assessments, PHH now offers an alternative to the Phase I ESA. The FAST[©] (which stands for "Fast Assessment for Site Transactions") can be completed within three to four working days. It is a decision-making tool that can quickly provide enough information to determine whether to proceed to a Phase II ESA. Quality is ensured since the FAST[©] is based on a recognized ASTM standard.

The major difference between the FAST[©] and Phase I ESA is in the level of reporting. As with the Phase I, the FAST[©] includes a historical review, an environmental database search and a site review. However, the FAST[©] report is much briefer, hence simpler and quicker to prepare. It consists of a letter outlining potential environmental concerns along with a copy of the completed FAST[©] questionnaire.

Three outcomes are possible upon completion of the FAST[©]:

1. The client decides to proceed with a Phase II ESA;
2. The client proceeds with the property transaction;
3. The client does not proceed with the property transaction.

In scenario #1, Phase II proceeds. The results of the FAST[©] can be incorporated into the Phase II report, thus eliminating the need for two separate and costly reports.

In scenario #2, the property transaction proceeds. If a Phase I report is required subsequently to secure financing, it can be completed using information obtained during completion of the FAST[©]. The key (location) map, site plans, annotated site photographs of significant features of the site, detailed historical data, and letters from regulatory authorities collected during the FAST[©] survey can be included in the complete Phase I report.

If the purchase does not proceed (scenario #3) there has been a significant saving in both time and money.

The intention is not to replace the Phase I ESA with the

FAST[©] in all situations, but to add an additional tool to the pre-purchase assessment process. It offers greater flexibility and increases the assessment options for the purchaser, property owner and the environmental consultant. ❖

NEW BRITISH COLUMBIA WCB REGULATIONS HIGHLIGHTS

By Michael Mysak & Ralph Shearman

April 15th, 1999 has come and gone, and so has the WCB's 'grace period' for full application of the new WCB Health and Safety Regulations. Is your company in compliance with the new Regulations? The new Regulations have several significant changes that affect workplaces every-

where. In this brief article we would like to cover some of the key areas where changes have been made.

Some of the most significant changes to regulations apply to:

- Exposure Control Plans (Regulation 5.54);
- Risk Assessments;
- Lead;
- Confined Spaces;
- Notice of Project (NOP) for all Projects over \$100,000;
- Indoor Air Quality;
- Ergonomics; and
- Asbestos

EXPOSURE CONTROL PLAN

An Exposure Control Plan (ECP) is a new, systematic approach to understanding and dealing with exposures to chemical and biological substances, and other hazardous conditions as outlined in Part 5 of the new Regulations. An ECP is a proactive approach to worker exposures in the workplace. Each regulated substance or chemical in use in the workplace MUST have a visual assessment of the risk of over-exposure (see Part 5 of the Regulations for regulated substance list). Where there is a risk of over-exposure to any chemical, sampling data must be used to evaluate the risk. For example, a mill or manufacturing plant where workers are exposed to wood dust, which has been designated a KI

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Fast track your way through environmental assessments.

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