

WAC 173-340-700 Overview of cleanup standards. (1) Purpose.

This section provides an overview of the methods for establishing cleanup standards that apply to a release or threatened release of a hazardous substance at a site. If there are any inconsistencies between this section and any specifically referenced section, the referenced section shall govern.

(2) **Explanation of term "cleanup level."** A cleanup level is the concentration of a hazardous substance in soil, water, air or sediment that is determined to be protective of human health and the environment under specified exposure conditions. Cleanup levels, in combination with points of compliance, typically define the area or volume of soil, water, air or sediment at a site that must be addressed by the cleanup action.

(3) **Explanation of term "cleanup standards."** Cleanup standards consist of the following:

(a) Cleanup levels for hazardous substances present at the site;

(b) The location where these cleanup levels must be met (point of compliance); and

(c) Other regulatory requirements that apply to the site because of the type of action and/or location of the site ("applicable state and federal laws").

(4) **Relationship between cleanup standards and cleanup actions.**

(a) Cleanup standards are identified for the particular hazardous substances at a site and the specific areas or pathways, such as land or water, where humans and the environment can become exposed to these substances. Part 7 of this chapter provides uniform methods statewide for identifying cleanup standards and requires that all cleanups under the act meet these standards. The actual degree of cleanup may vary from site to site and will be determined by the cleanup action alternative selected under WAC 173-340-350 through 173-340-390.

(b) For most sites, there are several cleanup technologies or combinations of cleanup technologies ("cleanup action alternatives") that may be used to comply with cleanup standards at individual sites. Other parts of this chapter govern the process for planning and deciding on the cleanup action to be taken at a site. This may include establishing "remediation levels," or the concentrations of hazardous substances above which a particular cleanup technology will be applied. See WAC 173-340-350 through 173-340-390. WAC 173-340-355 contains detailed information on establishing remediation levels. WAC 173-340-410 specifies the monitoring required to ensure that the remedy is effective.

(c) Where a cleanup action involves containment of soils with hazardous substances above cleanup levels, the cleanup action may be determined to comply with cleanup standards, provided the compliance monitoring program is designed to ensure the long-term integrity of the containment system, and the other requirements for containment in this chapter are met.

(5) **Methods for setting cleanup levels.** The first step in setting cleanup levels is to identify the nature of the contamination, the potentially contaminated media, the current and potential pathways of exposure, the current and potential receptors, and the current and potential land and resource uses. A conceptual site model may be developed as part of this scoping process. Cleanup levels may then be established for each media. Both the conceptual site model and cleanup levels may be refined as additional information is collected during the remedial investigation/feasibility study. See WAC 173-340-708(3) for additional information on how to determine current and potential

future land and resource uses for the conceptual site model. These rules provide three approaches for establishing cleanup levels:

(a) **Method A: ARARs and Tables.** On some sites, the cleanup action may be routine (WAC 173-340-200) or may involve relatively few hazardous substances. Under Method A, cleanup levels at these sites are set at concentrations at least as stringent as concentrations specified in applicable state and federal laws (ARARs) and Tables 720-1, 740-1, and 745-1 of this chapter.

Method A cleanup levels for hazardous substances that are deemed indicator hazardous substances at the site under WAC 173-340-708(2) and are not addressed under applicable state and federal laws or Tables 720-1, 740-1, and 745-1 must be established at concentrations which do not exceed the natural background concentration or the practical quantitation limit, whichever is higher.

For soil contamination, the potential impact of hazardous substances on terrestrial ecological receptors must be evaluated under WAC 173-340-7490 through 173-340-7494. Specifically, either an exclusion must be established for the site under WAC 173-340-7491 or a terrestrial ecological evaluation must be conducted under WAC 173-340-7492 or 173-340-7493. The terrestrial ecological evaluation may result in a more stringent Method A soil cleanup level than is required to protect human health.

Except where institutional controls are required by WAC 173-340-440(4), site cleanups that achieve Method A cleanup levels may be used without future restrictions on the property due to residual levels of contamination.

(b) **Method B: Universal method.** Method B is the universal method for determining cleanup levels for all media at all sites. Under Method B, cleanup levels for individual hazardous substances are established using applicable state and federal laws and the risk equations and other requirements specified in WAC 173-340-720 through 173-340-760.

Method B is divided into two tiers: Standard and modified. Standard Method B uses generic default assumptions to calculate cleanup levels. Modified Method B provides for the use of chemical-specific or site-specific information to change selected default assumptions, within the limitations allowed in WAC 173-340-708. Modified Method B may be used to establish cleanup levels.

Modified Method B may also be used in a quantitative risk assessment to help assess the protectiveness of a remedy by modifying input parameters as described in WAC 173-340-720 through 173-340-750 or by using other modifications that meet the requirements of WAC 173-340-702 and 173-340-708. See WAC 173-340-355 and 173-340-357 for more information on remediation levels and quantitative risk assessment.

For individual carcinogens, both standard and modified Method B cleanup levels are based upon the upper bound of the estimated excess lifetime cancer risk of one in 1,000,000 (1×10^{-6}).

For individual noncarcinogenic substances, both standard and modified Method B cleanup levels are set at concentrations which are anticipated to result in no acute or chronic toxic effects on human health (that is, hazard quotient of one or less) and no significant adverse effects on the propagation of aquatic and terrestrial organisms.

Where a site involves multiple hazardous substances and/or multiple pathways of exposure, then standard and modified Method B cleanup

levels for individual substances must be adjusted downward for additive health effects in accordance with the procedures in WAC 173-340-708 if the total excess lifetime cancer risk for a site exceeds one in 100,000 (1×10^{-5}) or the hazard index for substances with similar noncarcinogenic toxic effects exceeds one.

For soil contamination, the potential impact of hazardous substances on terrestrial ecological receptors must be evaluated under WAC 173-340-7490 through 173-340-7494. Specifically, either an exclusion must be established for the site under WAC 173-340-7491 or a terrestrial ecological evaluation must be conducted under WAC 173-340-7492 or 173-340-7493. The terrestrial ecological evaluation may result in a more stringent Method B soil cleanup level for the site than is required to protect human health.

Except where institutional controls are required by WAC 173-340-440(4), site cleanups that achieve Method B cleanup levels may be used without future restrictions on the property due to residual levels of contamination.

(c) **Method C: Conditional method.** Compliance with cleanup levels developed under Method A or B may be impossible to achieve or may cause greater environmental harm. In those situations, Method C cleanup levels for individual hazardous substances may be established for surface water, groundwater, and air. Method C industrial soil and air cleanup levels may also be established at industrial properties that meet the criteria in WAC 173-340-745.

Under Method C, cleanup levels for individual hazardous substances are established using applicable state and federal laws and the risk equations and other requirements specified in WAC 173-340-720 through 173-340-760. Method C is divided into two tiers: Standard and modified. Standard Method C uses generic default assumptions to calculate cleanup levels. Modified Method C provides for the use of chemical-specific or site-specific information to change selected default assumptions, within the limitations allowed in WAC 173-340-708. Modified Method C may be used to establish cleanup levels.

Modified Method C may also be used in a quantitative risk assessment to help assess the protectiveness of a remedy by modifying input parameters as described in WAC 173-340-720 through 173-340-750 or by using other modifications that meet the requirements of WAC 173-340-702 and 173-340-708. See WAC 173-340-355 and 173-340-357 for more information on remediation levels and quantitative risk assessment.

For individual carcinogens, both standard and modified Method C cleanup levels are based upon the upper bound of the estimated lifetime cancer risk of one in 100,000 (1×10^{-5}).

For individual noncarcinogenic substances, both standard and modified Method C cleanup levels are set at concentrations which are anticipated to result in no acute or chronic toxic effects on human health (that is, hazard quotient of one or less) and no significant adverse effects on the protection and propagation of aquatic and terrestrial organisms.

Where a site involves multiple hazardous substances and/or multiple pathways of exposure, then both standard and modified Method C cleanup levels for individual substances must be adjusted downward for additive health effects in accordance with the procedures in WAC 173-340-708 if the total excess lifetime cancer risk for a site exceeds one in 100,000 (1×10^{-5}) or the hazard index for substances with similar noncarcinogenic toxic effects exceeds one.

For soil contamination, the potential impact of hazardous substances on terrestrial ecological receptors must be evaluated under WAC 173-340-7490 through 173-340-7494. Specifically, either an exclusion must be established for the site under WAC 173-340-7491 or a terrestrial ecological evaluation must be conducted under WAC 173-340-7492 or 173-340-7493. The terrestrial ecological evaluation may result in a more stringent Method C soil cleanup level for the site than is required to protect human health.

Site cleanups establishing Method C cleanup levels must have restrictions placed on the property (institutional controls) to ensure future protection of human health and the environment.

(6) **Requirements for setting cleanup levels.** Several requirements apply to cleanups under any of the three methods. Some of these requirements, such as the identification of applicable state and federal laws, describe analyses used along with Methods A, B or C in order to set cleanup levels for particular substances at a site. Others describe the technical procedures to be used.

(a) **Applicable state and federal laws.** RCW 70A.305.030 (2)(e) requires the cleanup standards in these rules to be "at least as stringent as all applicable state and federal laws." In addition to establishing minimum requirements for cleanup standards, applicable state and federal laws may also impose certain technical and procedural requirements for performing cleanup actions. These requirements are described in WAC 173-340-710 and are similar to the "ARAR" (applicable, relevant and appropriate requirements) approach of the federal superfund law. Sites that are cleaned up under an order or decree may be exempt from obtaining a permit under certain other laws but they must still meet the substantive requirements of these other laws. (See WAC 173-340-710(9).)

(b) **Cross-media contamination.** In some situations, migration of hazardous substances from one medium may cause contamination in a second media. For example, the release of hazardous substances in soil may cause groundwater contamination. Under Methods A, B, and C, cleanup levels must be established at concentrations that prevent violations of cleanup levels for other media.

(c) **Risk assessment procedures.** The analyses performed under Methods B and C use several default assumptions for defining cleanup levels for carcinogens and noncarcinogens. The individual default assumptions and procedures for modifying these assumptions based on site-specific information are specified in WAC 173-340-708 and 173-340-720 through 173-340-750. WAC 173-340-708 also provides rules for use of indicator hazardous substances. The standards for review of new scientific information are described in WAC 173-340-702 (14), (15) and (16).

(d) **Natural background and analytical considerations.** In some cases, cleanup levels calculated using the methods specified in this chapter are less than natural background levels or levels that can be reliably measured. In those situations, the cleanup level shall be established at a concentration equal to the practical quantitation limit or natural background concentration, whichever is higher. See WAC 173-340-707 and 173-340-709 for additional information.

(7) **Procedures for demonstrating compliance with cleanup standards.** Setting cleanup standards also involves being able to demonstrate that they have been met. This involves specifying where on the site the cleanup levels must be met ("points of compliance"), how long it takes for a site to meet cleanup levels ("restoration time frame"), and conducting sufficient monitoring to demonstrate that the cleanup

standards have been met and will continue to be met in the future. The provisions for establishing points of compliance are in WAC 173-340-720 through 173-340-750. The provisions for establishing restoration time frames are in WAC 173-340-360. The compliance monitoring plan prepared under WAC 173-340-410 specifies precisely how these are measured for each site. At sites where remediation levels are used, the compliance monitoring plan will also need to describe the performance monitoring to be conducted to demonstrate the remediation levels have been achieved.

(8) **Specific procedures for setting cleanup levels at petroleum contaminated sites.** In addition to the other requirements in this section, this chapter provides for the following specific procedures to establish cleanup levels at sites where there has been a release of total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) and hazardous substances associated with a release of TPH.

(a) For soil contamination, the potential impact of TPH on terrestrial ecological receptors must be evaluated under WAC 173-340-7490 through 173-340-7494. Specifically, either an exclusion must be established for the site under WAC 173-340-7491 or a terrestrial ecological evaluation must be conducted under WAC 173-340-7492 or 173-340-7493. The terrestrial ecological evaluation may result in a more stringent soil cleanup level than is required to protect human health.

(b) It is necessary to analyze for and evaluate certain carcinogenic and noncarcinogenic hazardous substances that may be associated with a release of TPH. These are identified in Table 830-1. In cases where the cleanup level for one or more of these associated hazardous substances is exceeded but the TPH cleanup level is not, the cleanup level shall be based on the associated hazardous substance.

(i) **Method A.** Method A may be used to establish cleanup levels for TPH and associated hazardous substances at qualifying sites (see WAC 173-340-704). At these sites, the presence, location and concentration of TPH may be established by using the NWTPH method described in the "*Analytical Methods for Petroleum Hydrocarbons*," publication number 97-602, dated June 1997. The NWTPH method is a simplified, and relatively inexpensive, analytical method for evaluating TPH. Method A cleanup levels have been determined for four common petroleum mixtures: Gasoline range organics (GRO), diesel range organics (DRO), heavy oils, and electrical insulating mineral oil, as well as many hazardous substances that may be associated with the TPH. A site owner may decide to use Method A for some substances or media and Method B or C for others, depending upon site conditions and qualifications.

(ii) **Method B and Method C tiered approach.** This chapter provides for a three-tiered approach for establishing Method B and Method C cleanup levels at sites that involve a release of TPH. These tiers are not required to be approached sequentially (that is, the process may be started at any tier). The tiered process allows one to calculate different cleanup levels for TPH and associated hazardous substances using progressively more complex and site-specific information, and also allows for basing the cleanup levels on the presence or absence of exposure pathways, determined as part of the conceptual site model. In establishing a TPH cleanup level using the tiered process, it is still necessary to comply with other requirements and procedures under WAC 173-340-700 through 173-340-750.

(A) **Conceptual site model.** The first step in setting Method B or C cleanup levels for TPH is to identify the nature of the contamination, the potentially contaminated media, the current and potential pathways of exposure, the current and potential receptors, and the

current and potential land and resource uses. A conceptual site model should be developed as part of this scoping process. See WAC 173-340-708(3) for additional information on how to determine current and potential future land and resource uses for the conceptual site model.

(B) General description of the three tiers.

(I) Tier 1 consists of the standard Method B and Method C formulas and requirements under WAC 173-340-720 through 173-340-750 for each applicable pathway identified by the conceptual site model, including specific requirements set forth in those sections for petroleum mixtures.

(II) Tier 2 consists of the site-specific use of modified Method B and Method C formulas and requirements under WAC 173-340-720 through 173-340-750 for each applicable exposure pathway identified by the conceptual site model; and inclusion and development of additional, site-specific exposure pathways not addressed in Method A or Tier 1.

(III) Tier 3 consists of the site-specific use of standard or modified Method B and Method C formulas and requirements for each applicable exposure pathway identified by the conceptual site model and the use of new scientific information to establish a cleanup level as provided under WAC 173-340-702 (14), (15) and (16). It is considered a more complex evaluation in terms of technical sophistication (such as the use of new fate and transport models), data needs, cost and time.

(IV) A single tier may be used for all exposure pathways or more than one tier may be used when there are multiple exposure pathways.

(C) Fractionated approach. Method B and Method C cleanup levels for TPH are determined using the fractionated analytical approach for petroleum as described in the "*Analytical Methods for Petroleum Hydrocarbons*," publication number 97-602, dated June 1997. This approach divides the TPH mixture into equivalent carbon numbers. Use of the fractionated approach requires testing or knowledge to define product composition as described under subsection (8)(b)(ii)(D) of this section ("Determination of product composition"). Cleanup levels are then calculated using reference doses that have been determined by the department for each fraction. Cleanup levels also need to consider the measured or predicted ability of the fractions to migrate from one medium to other media. Where multiple pathways of exposure for a particular medium are identified in the conceptual site model, the most stringent of the concentrations calculated for the various pathways becomes the cleanup level. For example, for soil contamination, if the direct contact and leaching pathways are potential exposure pathways, then a soil concentration would be calculated for each pathway and the lowest calculated concentration would become the cleanup level.

(D) Determination of product composition. Product composition may be determined by analyzing each sample in accordance with the VPH/EPH method described in the "*Analytical Methods for Petroleum Hydrocarbons*," publication number 97-602, dated June 1997. Alternatively, product composition may be determined by one of the following methods:

(I) Correlation. Where WTPH or NWTPH methods described in Method 6 are used to collect and analyze the presence, location and concentration of TPH, knowledge of the fraction-specific composition of the petroleum released at the site may be based on analysis and correlation of a portion of the site samples with both the VPH/EPH and WTPH/NWTPH methods.

(II) Retrofitting. Where WTPH or NWTPH methods were used to collect and analyze the presence, location and concentration of TPH before the effective date of this provision, knowledge of the fraction-

specific composition of the petroleum released at the site may be based on the fraction-specific composition assumptions used by the department to calculate Method A cleanup levels, which the department shall publish in guidance. If the identity of the petroleum product released at the site is not known, or is a mixture of products, retrofitting under this provision shall be based on the composition that yields the lowest TPH cleanup level.

(E) **Consultation with the department.** Because of the complexity of the development of site-specific Method B and Method C petroleum cleanup levels using the second or third tiers described above, or the use of correlated or retrofitted data, persons planning on using these methods are encouraged to contact the department to obtain appropriate technical guidance.

[Statutory Authority: Chapters 70A.305 and 70A.355 RCW. WSR 23-17-159 (Order 18-09), § 173-340-700, filed 8/23/23, effective 1/1/24. Statutory Authority: Chapter 70.105D RCW. WSR 01-05-024 (Order 97-09A), § 173-340-700, filed 2/12/01, effective 8/15/01; WSR 96-04-010 (Order 94-37), § 173-340-700, filed 1/26/96, effective 2/26/96; WSR 91-04-019, § 173-340-700, filed 1/28/91, effective 2/28/91; WSR 90-08-086, § 173-340-700, filed 4/3/90, effective 5/4/90.]