

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management's Site Remediation Program & Environmental Justice

DEM's SITE REMEDIATION PROGRAM

WHO WE ARE

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) is the state agency responsible for preserving the quality of Rhode Island's environment. In 1995, Rhode Island passed the Industrial Property Remediation and Reuse Act (amended in 1997) and established a voluntary program for brownfields cleanup through DEM. This Act created the Office of Land Revitalization & Sustainable Material Management's (LRSMM) Site Remediation Program. The Program encourages and supports the redevelopment and reuse of contaminated properties throughout RI. The Program was established to provide fair, comprehensive, and consistent regulation of the investigation and remediation of hazardous waste, hazardous material, and petroleum releases. The State program is designed to determine if a site poses a threat to human health and the environment and efficiently determine a remedy that is effective but not overly burdensome to the parties involved.

PROGRAM PURPOSE

The purpose of the Site Remediation Program is to regulate and provide technical oversight for the investigation and remediation of releases of hazardous waste or hazardous material to the environment; to ensure that those investigations and remedial activities are conducted in a consistent manner that adequately protects human health and the environment; and to enforce regulations regarding the proper disposal of abandoned hazardous waste.

THE PROCESS

Cleaning a contaminated site requires investigation, planning, and action. The Rules and Regulations for the Investigation and Remediation of Hazardous Material Releases (<https://rules.sos.ri.gov/regulations/part/250-140-30-1>) define the specific documents that are needed, or may be needed as part of that process:

- Notification of Release
- Site Investigation Work Plan (SIWP)
- Public Notice of Investigation
- Site Investigation Report (SIR)
- Public Notice of Completed Site Investigation & Public Comment Period on Technical Feasibility of Proposed Remedy
- Remedial Action Work Plan (RAWP)
- Remedial Action
- Closure Report
- Environmental Land Usage Restriction (ELUR), if applicable

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

DEM Contact in Attached Letter
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BROWNFIELDS

WHAT IS A BROWNFIELD

Brownfields are real property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.

DETERMING IF A SITE IS A BROWNFIELD OR IS CONTAMINATED

To determine if a site is a brownfield, a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) should be conducted. This will determine the history of the property in which one is interested. The Phase I ESA will also determine any Recognized Environmental Concerns (RECs). If RECs are determined, a Phase II ESA, otherwise referred to as a site investigation, will be conducted. The Phase II ESA will determine whether contamination exists at a site.

TYPES OF CONTAMINANTS

- Metals
- Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs)
- Semi-VOCs
 - Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons (PAHs)
- Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)
- Petroleum Hydrocarbons

EXAMPLES OF BROWNFIELDS

- Abandoned Mills
- Gasoline & Service Stations
- Manufacturing Companies
- Dry Cleaners
- Print Shops
- Commercial / Strip Malls
 - Hair & Nail Salons
 - Home Improvement / Paint Stores
- Doctor, Dentist, Veterinary Clinic
- Farms & Orchards

ADVANTAGES TO REDEVELOPING A BROWNFIELD

- Existing infrastructure
- Tax incentives
- Labor concentration
- Improve public health and safety
- Improve air and water quality
- Preserve historical landmarks and heritage architecture
- Beautify urban landscapes
- Reduce neighborhood blight
- Facilitate job growth

REDEVELOPMENT POSSIBILITIES

- Open Space / Green Space / Athletic Fields
- Affordable Housing
- Industrial/Commercial Space
- Mixed-Use Space
- So much more!

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

HOW IT STARTED

As a result of Rhode Island's industrial history and heritage, many properties in the State have been impacted by past activities. Impacts include environmental contamination by oil and hazardous chemicals that were used in these operations. Many of the impacted sites are in the urban centers of the State. In many cases, low income and minority populations live in the communities around the sites. These populations have been subject to many historical inequities. Addressing these inequities and providing a fair, effective process for future involvement in site remediation projects is a main premise of environmental justice.

WHAT IS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE (EJ)

EJ is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income, with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies.

WHAT IS AN EJ AREA

EJ focus areas are defined as United States Census block groups that are in the highest fifteen percent (15%) of all Census block groups in RI with respect to the percent population identified as racial minorities or the highest fifteen percent (15%) of RI census block groups with respect to percent population with income identified as being twice the federal poverty level or below (utilizing the most recent and readily available data from the United States Census).

IS MY PROPERTY IN AN EJ AREA

Check out DEM's ArcGIS map:

<https://ridemgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=87e104c8adb449eb9f905e5f18020de5>

HOW DEM ADDRESSES EJ

Reference RIGL §23-19.14-5 to learn more about environmental equity and public participation.

