

Contaminated Land News – January 2000

DD 175

DD 175 (1988) is dead. Long live DC 98/564053 (1998). Ten years after its first release, a revised edition of the draft *Code of Practice for the Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites* was released by the British Standards Institute. The BSI drafting committee will by now be busy going through the consultations received before the 30 November deadline. The old and much misused draft has now been withdrawn by BSI.

Much guidance has been and is shortly to be published on the investigation of potentially contaminated land from DETR, CIRIA, the Environment Agency and others. The drafting committee have recognised this work and pointed to it rather than trying to summarise or duplicate it – for which they should be gratefully praised! Surprisingly though they do not seem to acknowledge the significant changes, particularly with respect to the description of contaminated materials, in the draft BS 5930: Code of Practice for Site Investigations and cite only the 1980 version.

The new draft was the subject of a workshop held at the Society of Chemical Industries where the most burning issue was that of the number of samples to be taken. It was the inclusion of specific numbers of samples for sites of a given size that lead to the widest criticism of the 1988 draft.

The recognition of the importance of the conceptual site model is most welcome. Details of what such models should comprise at the end of the desk study and walkover stage and at the end of the intrusive investigation are given. Indeed the requirement for a conceptual model may go a long way to resolving the ‘how many samples’ debate for the answer then becomes one of ‘enough to reduce unacceptable uncertainty in the conceptual model’.

The integration of the geotechnical and contamination investigations is a worthy concept but the warning that an integrated investigation compromises the requirements of neither the geotechnical nor the contamination aspects must be heeded in all cases. This may mean deploying teams comprising ground specialists and contamination specialists, ensuring that logging is detailed enough for both purposes and of course that the investigation creates no new pathways.

The advice on gas sampling includes a warning about the limitation of spiker surveys. There are also nuggets of great value in the brief section on groundwater sampling.

The section on preparation and analysis of soil samples should be required reading for all those conducting risk assessments using the results of laboratory analyses of soil. Only then is there a chance that the quality of reporting required and accepted from analytical laboratories will be raised.

In many ways it is a shame that health and safety only merits inclusion as an appendix – and even then in a cursory manner.

Overall the new draft *Code of Practice for Investigation of Potentially Contaminated Sites* is a marked and much needed improvement on its predecessor and should be required reading for all involved in the investigation of potentially contaminated sites. Tightening up of definitions, better integration with existing and forthcoming guidance and an expansion on the health and safety aspects are needed before the final British Standard is issued. However do not wait until then to tear up your 1988 vintage DD 175 and acquire and use the 1998 version.

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