

Tank Site Remediation Program – Questions and Answers

General Information

Q. Why did owners from the first program receive up to an additional \$50,000?

A. In many cases, remediation costs exceeded the original base grant of \$110,000 for site assessment and remediation. The additional funding of up to a maximum of \$50,000 helped to complete the remediation of the more heavily contaminated sites, and it reimbursed those who completed this work at their own expense.

Q. If it costs more than the base grant to remediate a site, could the owner receive more funding?

A. The goal of the tank site remediation program was to provide financial assistance to owners to help remediate their contaminated sites. The maximum total grant for each site was \$160,000.00, including funding for both the environmental site assessment and remediation.

Q. Why were environmental site assessments required?

A. Before remediation can begin, an environmental site assessment is required to determine if there is contamination on the site that needs to be cleaned up. To develop an effective cleanup plan, it is first necessary to determine the full extent of contamination. Without this information, consultants would not be able to accurately establish cleanup costs or select the most cost-effective approach for remediation.

Q. How did the program allocate the funding?

A. Funding for a site was allocated after the Conditional Grant Agreement (CGA) was signed by both the applicant and the Minister's representative. The CGA allowed Alberta Municipal Affairs to pay invoices for the work carried out to remediate the site. As invoices were received, verified and approved, eligible remediation costs were paid on behalf of the property owner. The owner did not receive the funding directly.

Q. After a site was remediated, what confirmation was received?

A. The program required owners to retain the services of an accredited consulting engineer of their choice. This consultant must have been registered with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Alberta (APEGA). The consulting engineer would then provide the owner with reports documenting the results of their environmental site assessment and the remediation work.

Q. Is the property owner responsible for off-site contamination from their tank?

A. Yes. Alberta Environment and Parks and the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* require owners to clean all soil and groundwater contamination caused by their fuel operations, regardless of whether it is found on-or off-site. Any owners who believe that they, or their site's activities, did not cause contamination detected on adjacent properties must present supporting evidence to Environment and Parks. Please contact Environment and Parks, toll free in Alberta, at **310-3773** for more information.

Q. If a property owner was not approved for funding under the program, do they still have to remediate their contaminated tank site?

A. Yes. Alberta Environment and Parks and the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* require owners of contaminated properties to clean them up to established environmental standards. Please contact Environment and Parks, toll free in Alberta, at **310-3773** for more information.

Q. How will I know if a site meets government standards?

A. Alberta Environment and Parks introduced remediation certificates for petroleum storage tanks sites in 2009. Remediation certificates are documents issued to applicants to confirm that a previously contaminated area has been cleaned up to meet Alberta's standards. Applying for a remediation certificate is considered optional. Please contact Environment and Parks, toll free in Alberta, at **310-3773** for more information. The consulting engineer engaged in the remediation should also be able to confirm the state of the site.

Q. Since the program is closing on February 28, 2018, by when should any recommended field work be completed?

A. Typically, the fieldwork can be conducted in all kinds of weather. However, evaluating and reporting on the data gathered from the field takes time; past experience suggests that if the fieldwork is completed by late fall 2017, there will be ample time for the environmental consultant to complete the required reporting and subsequent invoicing by February 28, 2018.

Q. By when should the last invoice be submitted in order to be covered by the program?

A. Invoices must be submitted by February 28, 2018 to receive payment.

Q. What will happen to the grant funding available for the remediation of my property if it is not fully spent by February 28, 2018?

A. Once the program closes, unspent funding will not be available to participants and will be returned to general revenue.

Information about Municipally-owned Tank Sites

Q. If a municipality owns more than one site in the program and one of those sites does not require the entire grant provided, can the balance be applied to another site in the program?

A. No. Funding is provided specific to the property identified in the Conditional Grant Agreement.

Q. Do municipalities have other funding options if the funding received from the Tank Site Remediation Program was insufficient to fully remediate the site?

A. There are a number of provincial grants available to municipalities. This type of work would likely be considered a “land betterment” activity. As such, the project may be eligible for Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) funding or Federal Gas Tax Fund (GTF) funding. Please visit the [MSI](#) and [GTF](#) websites for more information.

Q. Can Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI) funding be used for tank site remediation?

A. Yes. MSI Capital funding may be used for “land betterment” activities, with or without a resulting capital asset being constructed, as long as the land is not intended for resale (Schedule 1 of the guidelines). Land and rights-of-way purchases where the land is intended for a specific, eligible capital project and where the project will be completed within 5 years of the anticipated project start date, or 10 years for transportation and utility corridors, may also qualify for MSI funding (Schedule 3 of the guidelines). The municipality may use future years’ MSI funding to support land purchase and/or land betterment activities as long as they follow the conditions noted above. Please visit the [MSI webpage](#) for more information.

Q. Can Federal Gas Tax Funding (GTF) be used for tank site remediation?

A. Yes. The “Brownfield redevelopment” category funds remediation or decontamination and redevelopment of a brownfield site within municipal boundaries. However, the remediation work must include: construction of public infrastructure eligible under any other category of the GTF, or publically-owned social housing, or municipal use public parks. The GTF does not fund the betterment of land intended for resale following remediation. Please visit the [GTF webpage](#) for more information.

Q. What is the municipality’s liability with respect to properties acquired by tax recovery, or from abandoned tanks found under municipal infrastructure such as roadways?

A. Please contact Alberta Environment and Parks for information about municipal liability for inherited contaminated sites. The ministry can be reached toll-free in Alberta by dialing **310-3773**. You may also wish to consult the *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act*. The Act can be accessed through the [Environment and Parks website](#).