

What is the Hazardous Sites List?

The Hazardous Sites List is a list of sites that have been assessed and ranked using the Washington Ranking Method (WARM). The list, which is a requirement of the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) Cleanup Regulation, Chapter 173-340 WAC, helps the Department of Ecology (Ecology) target where to spend cleanup funds. The list is updated twice a year.

How Are Sites Ranked?

Once Ecology receives a complaint about a piece of property or the practices of an owner or operator of a piece of property, an Ecology inspector or other delegated agency representative will go to the site and conduct an initial investigation. This involves looking at the present conditions of the site for signs of possible spills or discharges and the use and storage of hazardous waste. If Ecology determines further work is required after the initial investigation, a site hazard assessment (SHA) will be conducted. An SHA provides Ecology with basic information about a site.

Once an SHA has been conducted, Ecology then uses the WARM to estimate the potential threat the site poses if not cleaned up. Sites are ranked on a scale of one to five, with one representing the highest level of concern and five the lowest. When ranking a site, the primary exposure routes that could pose a risk to the public and the environment are taken into consideration. These are air, surface water, any release to sediments, and groundwater.

Hazard ranking is not an evaluation of the absolute risk a site poses to human health and the environment. Rather, a site's rank is relative to all other similarly assessed and ranked sites in the state. Information gathered during the SHA is used to determine the pathway scores of all applicable routes of exposure at the site

How Does a Site Get on the List?

Once a site goes through the ranking method and is ranked, it will appear on the Hazardous Sites List. Updates to the list occur at the end of February and August, twice yearly.

How Does the Site Ranking Affect Cleanup?

Ranking a site helps Ecology determine where to spend funds. However, public concern, a need for immediate response, and the availability of funding and cleanup staff also affect which sites get first priority for cleanup.

Can Site Rankings Change?

Ecology generally does not rerank sites, although a site's rank can change. Ecology may re-think a site if new or additional information is discovered that changes the site's relative health and environmental risk. The ranking system works similar to grading on a curve. The highest scoring sites are ranked as "ones" and the lowest as "fives." Thus, adding or removing sites from the list over time may also affect a site's rank.

How Does a Site Get Removed from the List?

A site may be removed from the list only if the site is cleaned up. In some cases, long-term monitoring and periodic reviews may be required to ensure the cleanup is adequate to protect the public and the environment. Ecology will provide public notice for any site it proposes to remove from the Hazardous Sites List.

Definitions

Each site on the Hazardous Sites List is categorized according to the status of the cleanup at the site. The site status categories used by Ecology are intended to give a general indication of the progress at the site. Typical categories include:

Awaiting further remedial action. This means cleanup work has not yet started at the site. Only a site hazardous assessment (SHA) has been done on the property.

Remedial action in progress. These are sites at which Ecology or the responsible party (with Ecology’s oversight) has started investigations, active construction, or actual cleanup work.

Construction complete. At these sites all major cleanup work has been completed, but conformational monitoring or operation and maintenance may continue to be performed at the site.

Independent remedial action. This indicates that the site owner/operator or the responsible party has independently conducted cleanup at the site.

How Can I Get More Information?

You can receive a copy of the Hazardous Sites List by calling (360) 407-7170 or by going to Ecology’s website at <http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/tcp/sites/SiteLists.htm>. For more information on a specific site, please contact the appropriate regional office listed below.

Central Region (<i>Benton, Chelan, Douglas, Kittitas, Klickitat, Okanogan, Yakima</i>)	15 West Yakima Ave, Suite 200 Yakima WA 98902-3452	509/575-2490
Eastern Region (<i>Adams, Asotin, Columbia, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Lincoln, Pend Oreille, Spokane, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman</i>)	N. 4601 Monroe, Suite 100 Spokane WA 99205-1295	509/329-3400
Northwest Region (<i>Island, King, Kitsap, San Juan, Skagit, Snohomish, Whatcom</i>)	3190 160 th Ave SE Bellevue WA 98008-5452	425/649-7000
Southwest Region (<i>Clallam, Clark, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Jefferson, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, Pierce, Skamania, Thurston, Wahkiakum</i>)	P O Box 47775 Olympia WA 98504-7775	360/407-6300

This focus sheet is intended to help the user understand the Model Toxics Control Act (MTCA) Cleanup Regulation, Chapter 173-340 WAC. It does not establish or modify regulatory requirements.

Special accommodations: To ask about the availability of this document in a version for the visually impaired call the Toxics Cleanup Program at 360-407-7170. Persons with hearing loss, call 711 for Washington Relay Service. Persons with a speech disability, call 877-833-6341.