

Process for Phase I Environmental Site Assessments for Private Sites

What is a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ESA)?

- A Phase I ESA is a research report on the site that examines the current and past uses of the site and identifies potential environmental concerns.
- A Phase I ESA under RPC's Brownfield Redevelopment Program is conducted in accordance with the USEPA's All Appropriate Inquiry requirements and the most recent ASTM E-1527 standard. This protects a potential buyer from being liable by the USEPA for past contamination at the site.
- The Phase I ESA report expires 12 months from the date of the report, with some sections expiring within 3 months. If the purchase of the site is not within this timeframe, part or all of the Phase I ESA will need to be updated prior to the sale of the property in order to receive the liability protection.

How do I get RPC to pay for a Phase I ESA at a site?

- 1) The Owner, Perspective Purchaser or Interested Developer submits an application to RPC to enroll the site in RPC's Brownfield Redevelopment Program.
- 2) RPC reviews the application, checks ownership information and determines preliminary eligibility. If funding is through a USEPA Brownfield Assessment Grant for Petroleum Sites, RPC will request a determination from LDEQ as to whether or not the site is eligible for Brownfield funding for sites with potential petroleum contamination.

Note: If the site is not eligible for any reason, RPC will contact the applicant and indicate why the property is not eligible and, if possible, what adjustments can be made to make the site eligible.

- 3) If RPC determines the site to be eligible for Brownfield funding, RPC then requests concurrence from EPA via a Property Eligibility Determination form (note: RPC may request information from applicant to complete the form). RPC may also contact LDEQ to determine the eligibility of the project.
- 4) As part of the EPA-approval process, RPC will request a signed access agreement from the applicant (to be completed by the property owner) to allow our consultant site entry as part of the Phase I ESA investigation. The access agreement also includes a provision that the property owner agrees to complete an environmental questionnaire provided by RPC's consultant and provide contact information on current and past tenants and site managers to the best of their knowledge.
- 5) Once EPA approves the site and the site access agreement is executed, RPC will issue a work order to our pre-selected consultant to perform the Phase I ESA, to be paid for through RPC's Brownfield Assessment Grants from the USEPA.

There are two potential results of a Phase I ESA:

- *No environmental concerns identified:* No further action required.
 - *Recognized environmental concerns identified:* Additional investigation including soil and/or groundwater sampling may be needed to determine if environmental contamination exists at the site.
- 6) Once the Phase I ESA is complete, the applicant will receive a copy of the report and RPC will review the findings and recommended actions with the applicant.

Acronyms used in this document:

ESA: Environmental Site Assessment

USEPA: United States Environmental Protection Agency

LDEQ: Louisiana Dept. of Environmental Quality

RPC: Regional Planning Commission