Manitoba
Environment and Climate

GUIDELINE
July 2023

MANAGEMENT OF HYDROVAC WASTES

1.0 Introduction

This guideline provides information and direction on the methods and protocols considered acceptable by Environment and Climate (the department) for the handling and disposal of hydrovac wastes.

2.0 Background

Hydro excavation (hydrovac) involves using a combination of high-pressure water and vacuum technology to excavate soil. This process is typically used to locate and expose existing underground infrastructure or for the installation of new underground infrastructure. It reduces the risk of damaging pre-existing underground utilities and can minimize ground surface disturbances. Hydrovac excavation has found many uses in transportation, oil and gas, utilities, engineering as well as in the industrial sector.

Hydrovac waste is a common term used for waste created in the sub-surface soil excavation process. The resulting slurry created is generally comprised of about 60 per cent liquid and 40 per cent solid material. As a result, the hydrovac waste must be disposed of at a facility that is capable of accepting and treating the material appropriately.

3.0 Role of Generators

A generator of hydrovac waste is the owner or occupier of the land being hydro excavated.

Assess the site and surrounding area prior to excavation in order to determine the presence of actual or potential contaminants of concern that could become part of the excavated material. Lab analysis should be conducted for all contaminants of concern, in order to characterize and dispose of the excavated material appropriately.

Generators of waste are responsible to ensure that the hydrovac waste is characterized and classified (i.e. hazardous, non-hazardous) as per the Hazardous Waste Regulation, M.R. 195/2015.

4.0 Off-site Disposal

Impacted hydrovac waste must be taken to a licensed facility that has the infrastructure and appropriate authorization to accept hydrovac waste.

Depositing impacted hydrovac waste on third-party land is not permitted. The generator, the carrier, and the landowner could be liable for any remediation and may be subject to enforcement action.

5.0 Reuse Options

At uncontaminated sites, soils may be recovered mechanically using centrifugal force or be interred in tank or similar containment unit where gravity assists in phase separation. The resulting separated materials may be reused as detailed below.

Upon phase separation, solid waste material and/or wastewater may be land applied, with the landowner's approval. The department encourages that written approval from landowners be obtained.

The following general principles for land application shall apply:

- Reuse is not permitted if the hydrovac waste is impacted; it must be disposed of at an approved licensed facility in accordance with legislative requirements.
- Application of hydrovac waste to agricultural lands is not permitted, unless specifically approved by the landowner.
- Application of hydrovac waste is not permitted to water bodies or courses.

6.0 For More Information

If environmental issues are suspected with a hydrovac project, contact the department for direction before any work is started.

For more information, please contact the Contaminated Sites Program at ContaminatedSites@gov.mb.ca.