

B. Pathways

The primary transport mechanisms for contaminants from the DEW Line landfills are considered to be:

- aerial transport of fine particles; and
- water transport, both as surface water run-off or subsurface water flow.

B.1 Aerial Transport of Contaminants

All contaminants can be transported as particles; windblown debris is not considered in this category, as debris pickup is inherent in any cleanup. Surface contamination or surface expressions of leachate imply the potential for aerial transport. This factor is given a low weight because the quantity of contaminated soil on the surface of a landfill is generally low relative to the quantity of contaminated soil at the site as a whole. In addition, it is anticipated that relative to the effect of water movement, aerial transport contributes less to the transport of contaminants away from a landfill.

B.2 Water Movement

Water movement includes the movement of surface water and subsurface water within the active layer. “Groundwater” is not addressed as an issue separate from surface water as the movement of water within the active layer is subject to the same driving forces as surface water. The intent of this sub-category is to examine factors that affect migration away from the landfill – slope, runoff, extent and type of cover on the landfill, annual precipitation and distance to surface water. Among these factors, topography, runoff potential and proximity to surface water are given the highest weight.

B.2.1 Topography

The degree of the slope on which the landfill is located is one of the major factors contributing to transport of contaminants; the scoring is carried out on a sliding scale. In cases where there are different slopes across the landfill, a weighted average is used.

B.2.2 Cover Material – Depth

The extent to which potential contaminants are available to transport is also dependent on the depth and type of cover material. The potential for leachate generation and correspondingly, leachate migration, is related to the infiltration of water into the landfill. Cover over the landfill helps mitigate infiltration of water into the landfill contents. As the thickness of the landfill cover increases, the likelihood that potential contaminants will be released from the landfill decreases. If the active layer is contained in the cover material above the debris, then the potential for surface water infiltration into the landfill is small; this circumstance is assigned the lowest score.

B.2.3 Cover Material – Type

The erosion potential of a landfill is partly based on the type of cover material. Erosion can eventually lead to the exposure of the landfill contents. Some cover materials are more susceptible to erosion than others; well graded gravels are the least susceptible, and silty materials are the most susceptible. In cases where there is no cover, this factor is assigned the highest score. Where the cover materials consist of a combination of soil types, the scoring should reflect the more conservative or higher score.

B.2.4 Surface Water/Run-Off Potential

This factor aims to describe the destructive potential of water action on the landfill, which could take the form of waves, streams, rivers or lakes; or seasonal drainage. Where there is significant seasonal drainage, the run-off potential is high. "Significant seasonal drainage" is defined as run-off that has the potential to transport large quantities and concentrations of contaminants to surface water courses over a short period of time (CCME 1992, p.23). Significant seasonal drainage also includes consideration of major snow drifting on a landfill.

B.2.5 Precipitation

The amount of precipitation received, either as rain or snow fall, affects the amount of surface water infiltration or run-off. The majority of the DEW Line sites receive less than 500 mm of precipitation annually, with the exception of Cape Dyer. Typically, the amount of precipitation at any site is relatively low; therefore it is unlikely that any single precipitation event would cause significant runoff. This factor is therefore given a relatively low weight.

B.2.6 Distance to Downgradient Perennial Surface Water/Seasonal Drainage Channel

The distance to surface water will affect the probability of contaminants reaching the watercourse. This factor can include streams, seasonal or perennial, running directly through the landfill, or streams and lakes downgradient from the landfill, but it is intended to exclude small ponds with no outflow. On very steep slopes this distance should consider the horizontal distance to the water body rather than the vertical drop. The impact of drainage with respect to contaminant exposure is not considered in this category (it is considered under Receptors); this factor determines whether there is a drainage pathway from the landfill.

C. Receptors

This section addresses the potential for impact on receptors, specifically, aquatic and terrestrial habitats, as well as human exposure. Impact on humans is the primary consideration; however, it should be recognized that impact on humans is implicit in the scoring of factors addressing ecosystem impact. The scoring within each category is to be based on recorded data, as well as local knowledge of the land use in the area, and therefore requires local input.

C.1 Potential Impact on Receiving Freshwater/Marine Habitat

The water body should be selected based on the potential effects on the receiving habitat. In the selection of the receiving water body to be used in the landfill evaluation matrix, consideration must be given to the regional drainage patterns. For example, where the drainage from a landfill is overland (i.e. there is no direct connection between the landfill and the downgradient water body), water bodies beyond 2 kilometers should not be used in the evaluation. This is based on the premise that natural attenuation of any potential contamination will occur with overland flow. Where a direct connection between a landfill and a downgradient water body exists, via a stream or interconnected ponds, the two-kilometre limit should not be used.

C.1.1 Proximity to Receiving Freshwater/Marine Habitat

"Receiving habitat" is considered to be the most potentially impacted significant body of water near the toe of the landfill. The water body may support freshwater or marine life and/or may be used by avifauna and/or terrestrial mammals as a water source. It is not necessarily the seasonal drainage course or perennial water body closest to the landfill toe. This section's objective is to select a habitat which support receptors rather than identify the closest body of water. It is assumed that only habitat downgradient from the landfill is to be considered (given that aerial transport of contaminants to habitat upgradient from the landfill will be addressed by the remediation of contaminated soil).

C.1.2 Estimated Habitat Usage – Freshwater/Marine

This section is scored based on the frequency of usage within the selected receiving water body: the level of biodiversity and the occurrence of calving/spawning should be considered in scoring. It is recognized that freshwater and/or marine wildlife is potentially more at risk compared with terrestrial wildlife or avifauna, which should only be exposed through water ingestion. Thus, when terrestrial wildlife or avifauna is the primary receptor, the score for this factor should fall into the moderate or low category based on the potential frequency of usage. Otherwise, when the selected water body sustains freshwater and/or marine wildlife, the level of biodiversity should be used to evaluate the score. It should be noted that the most conservative approach - in the selection of the receiving water body - must be used when scores from section C.1.1 and C.1.2 are combined. Finally, “Biologically sensitive” areas such as bird sanctuaries and/or endangered, threatened or vulnerable populations should be considered as “special considerations”.

C.2 Potential Impact on Receiving Terrestrial Habitat

C.2.1 Extent of Vegetation

Typically the area in which to consider vegetation would include an area 300 m downgradient from the toe of the landfill. The area within this distance is expected to be most susceptible to uptake of contaminants if they are leaching from the landfill, but a larger or smaller area could be considered if site specific conditions warrant it.

C.2.2 Estimated Habitat Usage – Terrestrial/Avifauna

The same criteria as for usage of aquatic habitat are to be applied.

C.3 Potential Human Exposure Through Land Use

C.3.1 Presence/Occupation

This factor addresses strictly dermal exposure and inhalation; consumption of food and water from the area is dealt with in subsequent factors. The risk of dermal exposure or inhalation is much lower when soil is frozen; therefore winter occupation of the site is assigned a low risk. "Summer" in this factor is intended to include the spring, summer and fall periods when the ground is not frozen. Within this factor, the scoring takes into account the likelihood and the duration of contact. In such way, proximity to a community is considered (high likelihood of contact), although proximity to a community does not necessarily trigger a high score if visits are infrequent (low duration of contact).

The likelihood of contact considers proximity to community or to a camp, as well as proximity to "travel routes". The duration of contact considers full time residences (i.e. as proximity to "travel routes" for high, summer camp for moderate, winter camp or travel routes as low). Scores may be interpolated between the allocated points, according to the table below.

Table 1-1: Scoring Guide for Section C.3.1

	High Likelihood of Contact	Moderate Likelihood of Contact	Low Likelihood of Contact
High Duration of Contact	8	6	4
Moderate Duration of Contact	6	4	2
Low Duration of Contact	4	2	1

For large DEW Line sites, different parts of the site need to be considered individually, as some areas of the site could be quite far (more than a few kilometres) from the landfill under consideration.

C.3.2 Proximity to Drinking Water Source

Regardless of whether the source is seasonal or perennial, an established community or a summer camp water source located downgradient of the landfill is to be considered in this factor.

C.3.3 Food Consumption

Sedentary organisms are more susceptible to local inputs as their exposure is large if they are downgradient from the landfill. These organisms can include bottom-dwellers such as sculpins, mussels, sea urchins etc., as well as terrestrial vegetation, which can be used for medicinal purposes. This kind of contamination “is quite localized when considered on a broad regional scale” (DIAND 1997, pg. 5). Migratory marine animals may have body burdens of contaminants; these are not directly attributable to local contaminant sources, as the vast majority of organochlorines, for instance, arrive in the Arctic via long range transport.

Caribou living in the general area of DEW Line sites do not have elevated levels of contaminants, since they feed over a very wide area. The Canadian Arctic Contaminant Assessment Report (DIAND, 1997) describes these results in more detail.

It is recognized, however, that sources such as DEW Line sites do contribute contaminants to the Arctic ecosystem. For the purpose of scoring the matrix, therefore, a high consumption of animals from the area surrounding the DEW Line sites has the potential to pose a higher risk than a low consumption, **although in general the risk remains low.**

This factor is divided into two sub-sections, and the score is the sum of the score for each of the two sub-sections.

1.3 Special Considerations

As indicated in the introduction to the matrix (section 1.1), each of the three main categories includes a “*special considerations*” factor. The proposed value of the special considerations factor is a maximum of ten percent of the overall score for each category. It is intended that no circumstance will allow a user to assign a special considerations score that will cause the score for that category to exceed the maximum allotted. To avoid undue bias, it is also suggested that the user should complete the entire evaluation form and score a site before addressing special considerations in the total score.

The Environmental Working Group (EWG) based the landfill risk evaluation matrix on the CCM model which defines three categories: contaminant source, pathways and receptors. Within those three categories, the EWG tried to address all of the possible factors contributing to risk. Recognizing that even a thorough matrix could never address all possible risk factors, special considerations were included to address specific risk factors, which are not general to all of the DEW Line sites.

As noted in the CCM document, the special considerations factor is not intended to be applied on a regular basis, as it addresses very site-specific risk factors. In fact, if the special consideration factor was being consistently applied in the scoring of landfills, it would indicate that the matrix itself was incomplete. Special considerations should be site-specific characteristics that can be documented.

Three examples of how special considerations could be applied are provided to clarify the use of such a classification:

Example 1. Wildlife on site

At Byron Bay, the caribou belong to the Peary herd, an endangered species. It may be that “special considerations” points would be assigned to the Receptors category when endangered, threatened and/or vulnerable species (COSEWIC, 1997) are known to visit the DEW Line landfill.