Environmental Excellence in Exploration

An Initiative of the Prospectors & Developers Association of Canada

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1.0 SITE MANAGEMENT

The primary goal of a site management system is to ensure that all persons entering the site complete their business in a safe, environmentally sensitive and effective manner. "All persons" includes contractors, visitors, inspectors and senior company management.

For the purposes of this e-manual a site is any area where exploration and related activities are conducted by you, your employees, contractors and subcontractors, whether or not you have land tenure. The following two examples would both be considered sites worthy of inclusion in your site management system:

- The location of contracted prospector's parked truck on the shoulder of a highway while the prospector is on reconnaissance traverse.
- The boat or floatplane loading area of a public dock.

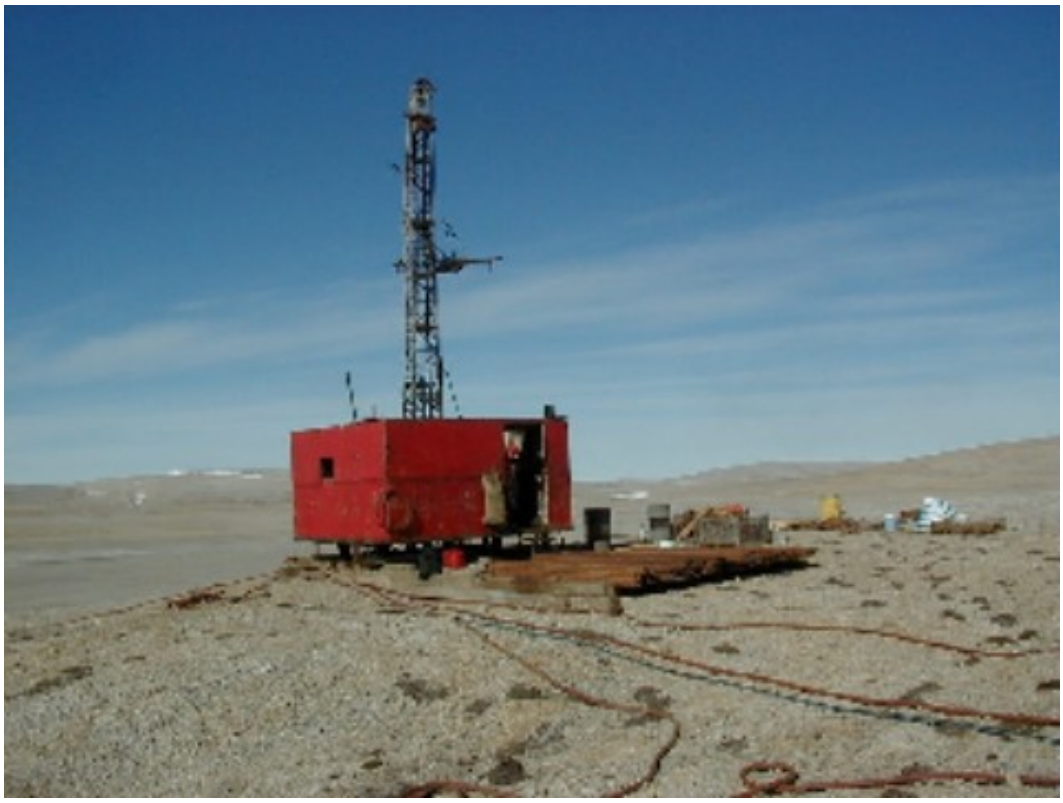
As described in the "E3 Best Practice Guidelines" section of this e-manual, site selection planning is an important factor in the safe and successful completion of any exploration program. Although access to water for consumption, hygiene, overburden stripping, sluicing, drilling and transportation is an important factor in the site selection process, you should also consider the effects that your selection will have on soil erosion, local and regional water resources and ecosystem health and future exploration programs.

Mining operations often take advantage of infrastructure established by exploration crews, so your planning (especially roads and camps) should consider potential long-term effects. In addition, you should be aware that water management and soil erosion control form the bulk of environmental control activities at operating and closed mine sites.

A site management system designed to effectively control safety, health and environmental risks includes procedures, training, checklists and documentation, and inspection of the following elements:

- Emergencies, accidents, spills and incidents,
- Notification and reporting,
- Noise, dust and other air emissions,
- Water resources,
- Aquatic life resources,
- Wildlife resources,
- Archaeological and cultural sites,
- Materials management,
- Waste management, and
- Traffic management.

This section offers you guidelines for dealing with all aspects of site management, from large programs to small ones. Much of the information will be too detailed for a small program, but you should be able to extract what is applicable to your program from the material presented here.



Drilling is probably the most exciting phase of exploration but we must always ensure the least environmental disturbance during this important activity.

1.1 Health and Safety

Health and Safety
Health and safety management systems are intended to ensure that every person leaves the site, or completes their shift, healthy and safe. All of your people on site must be aware of, and familiar with:

- The specific hazards associated with the site,
- The system used to identify hazards,

- The system for notifying their supervisor of an unsafe condition,
- The system for reporting an incident,
- The emergency (notification and evacuation) plan,
- The daily safety topic, including hazardous activities and materials,
- The system for participating in improvements to the site's health and safety performance, and
- The forms and checklists required to document and assess the above.

Health and safety legislation, and the corresponding management system, is typically based on every person's:

- Right to know,
- Right to refuse entry or work, and their
- Responsibility to report unsafe conditions.

1.2 Baseline Studies

Baseline Studies
Baseline studies are typically developed by experts and consultants once an economic deposit has been discovered. However, the risks and capital involved in developing mines in the twenty-first century requires a high degree of confidence and extensive exploration that, on its own can affect local communities and environment.

Your exploration programs should therefore be developed with plans for basic baseline studies, including documentation of empirical information such as wildlife sightings near camp, drill sites and on traverses. You should ensure that you carry out vegetation mapping during soil sampling and geological mapping programs.

In temperate and wet climates one of the most important components of even the simplest of baseline studies is information on water bodies. In arid and semi-arid climates soil erosion by wind and flash run off events is one of the most important components to identify and manage.

Your plan should start with a scoping exercise involving company management, safety, and environmental personnel, local environmental and cultural experts. In scoping, you should consider geographic boundaries, preferred timelines for the mine life cycle (exploration to closure), and socio-economic boundaries.

You should ensure that all baseline studies are well complemented by detailed and accurate maps, clear and concise descriptions, and documented by colour photographs with scales.

Although the initial survey stages of exploration may have very little environmental or socio-economic impact, successful results from these surveys may lead to accelerated exploration work in the area. You should have given sufficient thought to the need for baseline studies at the

early stages so that you can initiate them promptly as the surface exploration work commences.

For example, you should contact any local communities as early as possible so that you can identify issues that could be included in baseline studies as exploration proceeds. If you do not consider this early enough, the impetus of an aggressive exploration program may divert attention from the need to perform baseline studies.

Every exploration project anticipates the possibility of a significant discovery. There have been many cases where natural contamination could have been well documented before a discovery was developed through use of quality base line data. Once development begins, there is no way to satisfactorily demonstrate that exploration activity and subsequent mine development have not caused the contamination. Collect baseline data early and often.

1.2.1 Water Resources

Water resources and aquatic ecosystems are fiercely protected throughout the world. Many jurisdictions have layers of water resource protection legislation that overlap jurisdictions as well as covering both industrial and recreational activity. You must be aware of these layers of regulation. Several simple baseline activities can help you ensure that an expanding exploration program includes enough resource information to determine whether or not site conditions are natural or anthropogenic (man-made).

You should collect the following information during an exploration program that includes drilling, trenching, bulk sampling or exploration programs of more than two months duration, or from individual trenching, open cuts or drill holes that take longer than two weeks to complete:

- Water quality data,
- Bathymetry,
- River classification,
- Fisheries,
- Spawning areas, and
- Benthos and sediment quality.

You should collect as much as possible of the information prior to the start of your program by conducting literature searches and contacting local and regional regulators and academic institutions. State and federal resource literature often characterizes the region selected for exploration and forms a good outline for a baseline study.

Your program should include sampling for water quality and benthos. You will find that biological experts at local colleges, universities, provincial and central government offices or consulting companies can supply guidance, rental equipment, and even assistance at reasonable rates, or even free if the information is shared.

You can complete bathymetry with the use of a depth sounder (fish finder) and GPS. You can obtain spawning areas and fisheries data from any anglers in your crew, guided again by local or

regional experts regarding assessment details required to document spawning bed and fisheries' characteristics.

You should design water quality monitoring taking into account the potential contaminants contained in the local and regional rocks and soils and the hazardous materials used on site. You should, however, recognize that some common elements and ions may not be considered contaminants until years after an effect has been identified. Road salt and dust, for example, can be considered contaminants depending on the receiving environment's character and assimilative capacity.

You should take complete water quality analyses of samples using proper procedures and containers. Most commercial, certified laboratories will provide the procedures and sampling equipment required to complete this part of the program.

1.2.2 Cultural and Archeological Resources

In some instances your baseline studies may also have to include documentation and characterization of any cultural and archeological features. You should contact local communities and experts prior to any programs to determine the likelihood of finding such features.

Unless your program includes a staff expert then any such finds should be left untouched, mapped in and located, and marked off until the proper procedures are developed and implemented to characterize and document the find. Invariably, artifact removal will require authorization and approval from regulators or nearby communities, after developing an extraction plan with the company's management.

For a more complete discussion of this issue, refer to the section of this E-manual entitled "Archaeological and Cultural Sites".

1.3 Monitoring and Inspections

Monitoring and Inspections
You should design monitoring and inspections to

- Ensure programs and procedures are effective.
- Ensure persons on site are effectively using the programs and procedures.
- Ensure that site activities are compliant with programs and procedures.
- Document the status of the site.
- Ensure hazards and risks are identified, assessed and communicated.
- Help complete reports on safety and environmental performance.
- Help improve the safety and environmental performance by aiding in the review and

revisions of the programs and procedures.

You can use the following tools to help manage monitoring and inspection programs:

- Checklists
- Action Plans
- Regular schedules
- Proper tools and equipment
- Databases

Checklists are an excellent method of documenting monitoring and inspections. Checklists help you to ensure that the information collected is consistent and act as a reminder to the inspector or sampler.

You will find that action plans with schedules and responsible persons regularly assigned to the monitoring and inspection tasks are an important tool that act as reminders to site personnel and ensure that information and samples are collected at the right time.

Regularly scheduled inspections are the easiest for you and your crew to remember. Most people will find it easy to remember to check the generator fuel tank level every morning after coffee break.

As noted above, monitoring and inspections are most successful when completed regularly. You can complete the tasks regularly when you have the proper tools and equipment to complete the task.

Databases or spreadsheets are an excellent method of tracking the information collected. It is best if you or the field operators update databases and spreadsheets immediately upon collecting the information, and make sure that this is done by the person that collected it. Inevitably there will be data integrity problems if a designate tries to enter data a month or two after they are collected.

1.4 Site Clearing

Site Clearing
You should initiate site clearing only after you have obtained appropriate authorization and approval from local and regional regulators or communities. Your site clearing plan should include

- Vegetation removal, stockpiling and end-use procedures
- Overburden stockpile handling, storage and re-use procedures
- Sand, till and gravel removal, storage and use procedures

- Water resource impact control procedures
- Resource, artifact, fossil and environment value protection procedures

You should refer to the Land Disturbance portion of this section for more detailed guidance on site clearing issues.

In general, you should account for all materials moved during the clearing and they should be stockpiled to facilitate future use. In particular, you should save overburden and existing soil for re-vegetation.

You should not excavate sand, till or gravel below the water table without obtaining approval for your water pump-down and materials extraction plans. You should stack trees for future use or use by others. You should approve any alternatives to these general procedures prior to proceeding with site clearing.

1.5 Drainage Control

Drainage Control
If you are carrying out a small exploration program you may not require much in the way of drainage control. However, if you have larger camps and associated activities these will often require diverting fresh water, referred to here as run-on, and collection of contaminated runoff.

In these cases you should ensure that all ditches and berms are constructed to withstand the hydraulic energy of extreme precipitation and runoff events. Typically you would construct ditches and berms with slopes of 2H:1V.

You should vegetate and protect ditches with rip-rap, or appropriate engineered material, to control erosion and siltation. You may vegetate berms, but shrubs and trees must be removed to prevent destabilization of the berm core by extensive, water-seeking, root systems. You should key berms and ditches into impervious or well prepared foundations.

1.5.1 Run-on

You need to control run-on in order to minimize the volume of fresh water exposed to contaminants associated with exploration activities. Diversion berms and ditches prevent run-on and re-route it to nearby receiver creeks, rivers, wetlands, lakes and oceans. You should consult geotechnical experts for the design and construction of berms that retain water or divert existing rivers. However, you can construct small check dams with bales of hay to divert intermittent brooks running across a drill site, for example, which can easily improve the problems associated with managing contaminated water.

As with most of the management systems described in this manual, you should develop run-on plans prior to the start of the exploration program by determining the basic hydrology of the area to be worked. A topography map will provide you with the basis of a simple and effective run-on plan. As far as possible you should plan camps, drill sites, and extensive excavations off the line-of-fall of water draining to nearby valleys and low areas.

1.5.2 Runoff

Silt, spilled fuel, and leaked oil are contaminants that, once in water, require proper management in order to protect the local watersheds and their ecosystems. Once run-on hits your site, the runoff, or water that drains from the site toward a downstream water resource, may require management.

The contaminants noted above are common to most exploration sites, and you can manage them easily. Other contaminants, such as those resulting from spills, will require you to give them special handling as described in more detail in the Hazardous Materials and Spill Management sections of this manual.

The more difficult contaminants for you to manage are those that cannot be seen and those that may, or may not, be released. For example, metals and radioisotopes from rock and soil samples, drill dust and muds, core shack dust, or channel and chip sampling programs can contaminate nearby water resources and go undetected.

You should conduct a baseline water quality sampling program to help you to measure if, and to what extent, metal contamination has occurred. However, the most conservative approach is for you to ensure that these products do not enter the receiving watershed by managing their production, handling and disposal. You should refer to the Sample Handling section below for more details.

You will find that silt fences, made of fabric or hay staked in the path of solids contaminated runoff, and settling ponds can help reduce the release of cloudy, suspended solids-laden runoff to the receiver watershed. You should use absorbents to clean up leaked and spilled fuels and oils before they are released to water. In the event of release to water, you can use oil booms and pads to ensure these contaminants are not released to the environment.

Water treatment for metals control is complicated by the combination of metals in water and the characteristics of the water itself. Most heavy metals are not dissolved in water at neutral pH. Metals such as nickel and zinc, once dissolved in water, do not precipitate until the pH of the contaminated wastewater is brought up to 9.5 to 9.8. If water is acidified by exploration activities, or natural features, then other heavy metals such as copper, lead and cadmium can be dissolved as well.

To avoid treatment of acid- and metal-bearing wastewater, you should prevent pulverized, crushed sulphides and iron-rich exploration by-products from being released to the environment, from subsequent exposure of them to air and water and their consequent oxidation to form acid wastewater. The following subsection discusses sulphide waste.

1.5.2.1 Sulphide Waste

In the early stages of exploration the most likely sources of sulphide-bearing waste will be trench samples and drill core. You should characterize, handle and manage sulphide-bearing waste separate from other waste materials in order to avoid costly, and long-term, treatment requirements.

You should ensure that, wherever possible, you minimize the exposure of sulphide waste to surface water, since sulphides readily oxidize and form sulphuric acid that dissolves metals into site runoff. You should therefore make every effort to avoid acid generation at source by dealing properly with the sulphides before they have an opportunity to oxidize.

1.6 Security

Security
You should secure your exploration sites from entry by the public, as this is the only method of ensuring their protection from the hazards associated with exploration activities. As the site owner, you are ultimately responsible for the safety of everyone on the site, especially in the event of an emergency or debilitating injury. Properly securing a site from acts of vandalism also helps to prevent safety and environmental incidents.

Site security can be as simple as identifying site boundaries, or as elaborate as the use of fences, gates, surveillance, full-time security personnel, vehicle inspections, random searches and detection equipment. At each site, you will have to determine its requirements based on access, hazards and overall risk. Access typically relates to the likelihood of an incident, while hazards relate to the consequence associated with the occurrence of an incident.

Where access to your site by the public is possible, you should implement an appropriate security system. A selection of those available to you is set out below.

At the most basic level, you should have signs posted at the site boundary at its point of access, noting

- Company and property name,
- Access restrictions or conditions ("must report to"),
- Contact personnel and information,
- Authority under which access is restricted,
- Hazard warnings, and
- Emergency notification, reporting and response procedures.

In more advanced projects, and in order of increasing project risk, you should consider

- Signs restricting access or identifying hazards along site boundaries adjacent to access routes.
- Gates, and appropriate lights and reflectors, restricting vehicle access.
- Gates and fences restricting any access.
- Lights.
- Surveillance equipment.
- Security personnel.

1.6.1 Theft and Vandalism

Theft is not usually a widespread problem at an exploration site unless small, highly valuable or widely used materials and supplies, such as visible gold, diamonds and precision hand tools, are readily available to site personnel. In such cases, you should develop a theft prevention program prior to incidents of theft occurring.

You can prevent theft of widely used materials and supplies by maintaining a secure storage area operated by a responsible person in the corresponding department if your project is large enough to have responsibilities assigned to separate individuals. For example, these could include

- Administration for office supplies
- Maintenance or warehouseman for tools and consumables
- Information Technology for computer hardware and software
- The foreman/supervisor/manager/crew chief for all equipment and supplies

If the project is relatively small, then you as project manager will have responsibility for these aspects of your program.

You should also support your efforts at prevention by a consistently implemented system of enforcement. Theft and vandalism are serious matters that require your immediate, thoughtful and appropriate action. Therefore you should develop and communicate a company-wide policy as part of the induction process.

1.7 Sample Handling

Sample Handling
You should consider the information set out below as guidelines and not an exhaustive description of all the requirements and protocols associated with core splitting and storage, and percussion/rotary/reverse circulation drill cuttings storage. For detailed protocols and procedures legislation and guidelines you should always refer to local and regional authorities, commercial laboratories, or other experts.

Core and Chip Sampling

You should ensure that eye protection is used at all times while splitting core. Face shields or goggles provide better protection than safety glasses. Dust masks may also be required, particularly if you are splitting core with a diamond saw or recovering chips from a percussion, rotary or reverse circulation drill program.

To avoid injury and contamination, you should inspect hammer and core splitters prior to their use to ensure there are no cracks, splinters or burrs in the equipment.

You should collect rock detritus and dust daily and dispose of it according to the site waste management plan. In particular, sulphide waste and other potentially acid generating (PAG) waste rock should not be allowed to oxidize, so you should dispose of all PAG under water, preferably in an approved sulphides tailings pond, or keep it completely dry. In some cases waste may have to be stored for transport to an appropriate disposal facility. You should collect and treat drainage with dissolved or suspended oxidation products (acids or metal salts).

Storage

You should always store rock samples in a dry area to prevent oxidation and potential acid generation. In the case of core samples, secure covered rack storage is preferable, but the size of your drill program will dictate to you what your specific storage should be. The principle is that you should be able to retrieve any core samples that you may require for further examination or analysis.

You should ensure that your core trays are properly labelled with marker or stapled on "Dymo-type" tape, so that you can identify them for further work if that is required. You should also label properly bagged drill chips from percussion/rotary/reverse circulation drilling, and store them in a dry, secure area.

Final Sample Disposition

Most commercial and CAEAL certified laboratories offer a storage and final disposal service for any samples which you have sent to them. When your exploration program has finished you should either recover your drill core or cuttings or secure them for potential future use on site.

1.8 Concurrent Reclamation

Concurrent Reclamation
You should view concurrent reclamation, or rehabilitation, as an integral part of each exploration activity, and the exploration program as a whole. Reclamation programs are intended to bring land and natural resources under beneficial use from a waste condition. Rehabilitation programs are intended to restore land and natural resources to former or proper conditions.

You should establish and develop reclamation and rehabilitation performance criteria and plans prior to the start of exploration activities. Each of the measures set out in the following subsections should form an integral part of your exploration program, its goals, objectives and contract agreements, and should not be implemented as a separate, additional or delayed activity.

1.8.1 Continuing Exploration

Although drilling, stripping, trenching, bulk sampling, and exploration activity may continue for several years, you should reclaim and rehabilitate each area affected upon completion of your work. For example, you should reclaim each drill site during or immediately after demobilizing the drill crews and equipment while the resources are available to complete the reclamation, unless you expect to return to that specific site.

Proper procedures established with the drillers will avoid you having to pack out

- Garbage.
- Drill grease pails.
- Haywire.

- Spent drill bits.

Although later cleanup may be effective, it may not address larger-scale activities such as

- Overburden replacement.
- Revegetation.
- Erosion control structure dismantling.
- Upgrading or maintenance.
- Slope stabilization.

1.8.2 Terminated Operations

Prior to completing an exploration program you should reclaim:

- Drill sites,
- Trenches, and
- Camp sites.

You should remove any and all imported materials and wastes, and dispose of them properly. You should replace previously stockpiled overburden and organic soil, as applicable, and revegetate them with native plants. You can refer to the Land Disturbance section for more details of these procedures.

Prior to abandoning the site you should assess and properly secure the stability of

- Open pits.
- Open cuts.
- Waste rock stockpiles.
- Open holes (raises, adits, shafts, portals).
- Crown pillars.

Many of the items included in the list above are more normally encountered in relatively advanced exploration programs, which are beyond the scope of this version of E3. However, you may be carrying out early stage exploration in a previously explored, or even a previous producing, site and many of these elements may be present.

You should remove or reconstruct runoff control structures to endure for their designed lifespan. You should develop and implement inspection and maintenance programs for structures that are required for more than one year after completion of the exploration activities.

To restrict access, you should secure core racks and sample storage containers required for future reference, and not removed to a central depot. You should also establish an inspection and maintenance program that documents and ensures the continued integrity and security of core racks and sample storage.

1.8.3 Documentation

You should ensure that all reclamation and rehabilitation measures are well documented and accompanied by

- A detailed plan.
- A quantity survey.
- As-built drawings as required.

You should also provide well documented, dated colour photographs that include a scale or scale object such as a

- Pocket knife.
- Compass.
- Clipboard.
- Pick hammer.
- Core box.
- Drill rod.

To assist in future land-use planning you should submit to local or regional authorities reports on

- Assessment.
- Rehabilitation design.
- Rehabilitation as-built.

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