

Summary of Changes to the ch. NR 700 Series of Administrative Rules

RR-965

January 2015

Background: The NR 700 rule series provides comprehensive requirements for completing the investigation and remediation of contaminated property. Although additions and revisions to these rules have been made since they were originally promulgated in 1994, those changes were focused on very specific issues. The changes to the NR 700 Series are the result of a complete review and incorporation of many statutory, policy and technical changes that have occurred since original promulgation. The Remediation and Redevelopment (RR) Program received authorization from the Natural Resources Board to promulgate the rules at their February, 2013 meeting. Legislative review was completed in July, 2013.

This document provides a brief summary of the changes that go into effect on November 1, 2013. The individual chapters of the NR 700 rule series can be accessed online at docs.legis.wisconsin.gov/code/toc/nr. A red line/strikeout format of many of the rule chapters is available at: dnr.wi.gov/topic/Brownfields/Laws.html.

Summary of the Changes:

NR 169: Dry Cleaner Environmental Response Program – The changes to NR 169 are a result of the decision to eliminate the majority of NR 710 (Site Discovery, Screening, and Ranking). Three additional definitions have been added to define the terms high, medium and low priority. This will simplify the process the Department uses to assign dry cleaner sites a priority category.

NR 700: General Requirements – The most significant changes to NR 700 are eliminating the simple site process and adding a requirement for all sites to submit semi-annual progress reports. The simple site process was rarely used, especially more recently, and removing the language simplified several other rules as well. Semi-annual progress reports are intended to provide a straightforward method for tracking site progress. Several other changes to the rule include:

- Adding a definition of “Vapor Action Level” to include vapor concentrations that are at or above a 1-in-100,000 excess lifetime cancer risk for carcinogens and a hazard index at or above 1 for non-carcinogens;
- Adding a definition of “Department Database” in order to provide a term that is consistent with the statutory language;
- Modifying the definitions for “Limit of Detection” and “Limit of Quantitation” and adding a definition for “Method Detection Limit”;
- Adding a definition of “Sustainable Remedial Actions” since revisions to NR 722 include language for evaluating sustainability as part of remedy selection; and
- Modifying NR 700.11 to require the submission of a Site Investigation Work Plan within 60 days of receiving notification that an investigation is required. This language is consistent with changes to NR 716. See flowchart at:

dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/rr/RR967.pdf



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NR 706: Hazardous Substance Discharge Notification and Source Confirmation Requirements – A number of changes have been made, including:

- Removing most of the references to the Leaking Underground Storage Tank (LUST) program as these are either no longer needed or covered by other rule language;
- Clarifying that discharges to the environment may include long-term applications or permitted discharges;
- Providing more specific details on how to report non-emergency discharges;
- Clarifying that even if a discharge is exempt from notification, it must be adequately responded to; and
- Adding a provision to report the source and cause of discharges from LUST systems in order to comply with the 2005 Federal Energy Act.

NR 708: Immediate and Interim Actions – The most significant change to this rule is the addition of a section on Local Governmental Unit or Economic Development Corporation Exemptions, based on s. 292.11(9)(e)4, Wis. Stats. This section identifies the requirements that apply if the Department determines that additional action is necessary to make the site protective based on the intended use.

Several other changes include:

- Giving the Department the ability to consider soil removal actions of greater than 100 cubic yards as an immediate, non-emergency action on a case-by-case basis;
- Requiring the use of vapor mitigation systems or other engineering controls as an interim action if necessary; and
- Clarifying that a Site Investigation may not always be necessary after the completion of an interim action.

NR 710: Site Discovery, Screening and Ranking – This rule was originally established to provide DNR with a process for ranking sites with environmental contamination. DNR is eliminating this rule in part because the statutory provision for DNR to inventory sites was repealed and the hazard ranking system is no longer needed to determine the priority of a site. Two sections (i.e., ss. NR 710.05 – Identification of RPs and NR 710.09 – Superfund Site Assessment) along with several definitions have been retained and moved to ch. NR 700.

NR 712: Personnel Qualifications for Conducting Environmental Response Actions – The rule clarifies that NR 712 applies to the *submittal* of Phase I and Phase II environmental site assessments to the DNR. All Phase I or Phase II environmental site assessments submitted to the DNR must be prepared “by or under the supervision of a professional engineer, hydrogeologist or scientist”. The definition of hydrogeologist has been expanded to require licensing as a hydrogeologist or registration as a geologist with the Department of Safety and Professional Services.

NR 714: Public Participation and Notification – This rule has undergone fairly significant organizational changes in order to improve flow and readability. From a content standpoint, the major changes include:

- The provision requiring the Department to maintain lists and inventory sites has been removed and replaced with references to the Department’s public database;

- Language that specifically referenced LUST's has been removed or made more general in order to apply to a broad array of cleanup situations; and
- The section that required the Department to notify the public of cases being considered for closure that do not comply with all applicable Federal and State standards has been removed since that language is inconsistent with the case closure process.

NR 716: Site Investigations – There are a number of changes to this rule including:

- A site investigation work plan must be submitted within 60 days of receiving notification that a site investigation is required. If the site investigation work plan is submitted without a review fee, DNR has 30 days to provide comments. Whether DNR chooses to provide comments or not, the field investigation must be initiated within 90 days of submitting the work plan. In those cases where a review fee is submitted, the field investigation must be initiated within 60 days from the date DNR approves the work plan. See flowchart at: dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/rr/RR967.pdf;
- Adding a provision that requires the Site Investigation Report to be submitted to the Department within 60 days after completion of the field work and receipt of the data;
- Clarifying the importance of evaluating and estimating the mass of contamination in the source area;
- Improved well protection requirements in order to help reduce the number of wells that are destroyed and ultimately can't be properly abandoned;
- Adding a new section (s. NR 716.14) to clarify the process for notification of sampling results. This section was also made consistent with internal DNR procedures;
- Clarifying the requirements in ch. NR 141 (Groundwater Monitoring Well Requirements) regarding the establishment of a horizontal grid system for locating monitoring wells;
- Updating the SW-846 references; and
- Numerous organizational changes in order to make the rule flow more smoothly.

NR 718: Management of Contaminated Soil or Solid Wastes Excavated During Response Actions – The most significant change includes consolidating ss. NR 718.11, 718.13, and 718.14 into one section in order to simplify the requirements and make them consistent. Other changes include:

- Removing references to specific sections in ch. NR 720 (Soil Cleanup Standards) and replacing them with more generic ones based on the changes to that rule;
- The requirement to sample petroleum contaminated soil for Gasoline Range Organics (GRO) and Diesel Range Organics (DRO) has been eliminated and compound specific information will instead be relied on; and
- Adding a note indicating that RR-705 provides information and options for addressing sites that may be contaminated with hazardous waste.

NR 720: Soil Cleanup Standards – A number of significant changes have been made to this rule including:

- Removing Tables 1 & 2, the equation for calculating soil standards that are protective of groundwater, the standards for GRO/DRO, and all related rule language;
- Allowing the use of enforcement standards (up to the compound's solubility limit), rather than preventive action limits when calculating soil standards protective of groundwater;

- Specifying that the actual land use (not the expected land use) will determine the land use classification and therefore the appropriate soil cleanup value;
- Adding language to indicate when averaging soil sampling results may be appropriate;
- Modifying the default exposure assumptions to be consistent with EPA’s new web-based calculator; and
- Adding language in several locations to clarify that responsible parties have the option of either determining residual contaminant levels or using a soil performance standard.

NR 722: Standards for Selecting Remedial Actions – The most significant change to this rule was the addition of language on long-term environmental sustainability in several locations. With respect to state-funded cleanups, the rule language indicates that significant consideration will be given to remedies that maximize long-term benefits. Rule language has also been added that requires responsible parties to evaluate the long-term sustainability of the selected remedial option.

Other changes include:

- Clarifying the Department’s authority to require evaluation of the Vapor Intrusion pathway;
- Replacing the term “institutional controls” with “continuing obligations”; and
- Adding language that allows the Department to impose certain conditions when approving remedial action in order to ensure the site remains protective. These provisions are being included based on the authority contained in s. 292.12, Stats.

NR 724: Remedial and Interim Action Design, Implementation, Operation, Maintenance and Monitoring Requirements – The major changes to this rule are summarized as follows:

- Removing rule language dealing with “simple” sites. The Department changed NR 700 to eliminate the simple site process, since in practice it was seldom used. The changes to s. NR 724.05 are consistent with the changes to NR 700;
- Electronic copies of documents in addition to paper versions are required. This is intended to help the RR Program continue moving toward making more information available electronically;
- The rule language in s. NR 724.13 has been changed to specify that O&M Progress Reports be submitted semi-annually to coincide with General Progress Reports required in NR 700. In addition, the rule language specifying the content of O&M Progress Reports has been removed;
- All the provisions of Ch. 724 apply to vapor mitigation systems. The RP(s) must continue to implement (maintain, operate) any vapor mitigation system and monitoring requirements for as long as the Department requires (i.e., granting case closure). The property owner is obligated to operate (that is, not interfere with the effective operation and maintenance) of the vapor mitigation system. Once the case closure is granted, the responsibility for operation and maintenance passes to the property owner where the vapor mitigation system resides; and
- Section 724.19 has been modified to remove the reference to “soil and groundwater” and replaced with the phrase “any applicable environmental standards” since other standards could apply to environmental cleanup situations.

NR 725: Notification Requirements for Residual Contamination and Continuing Obligations – This is a new rule that identifies notification requirements to persons whose property will be affected by continuing obligations and/or residual contamination. The rule specifies those situations where a continuing obligation is required. The rule also requires that notification letters utilize a form provided by the Department.

NR 726: Case Closure – There are a number of changes to this rule with the most significant being:

- Adding closure criteria for sites with vapor contaminant sources;
- Expanding the information that must be provided for sites entered on the Department's database;
- Clarifying that sites where the Department approves a remedial action plan or directs a local governmental unit or economic development corporation to take action can be placed on the database if continuing obligations are imposed;
- Revising the provision that requires four (4) successive quarterly rounds of groundwater sampling as part of a case closure request to a minimum of eight (8) successive quarterly rounds, unless otherwise approved by the Department. A note was also added following this provision to clarify those situations where an alternative sampling program may be approved;
- Specifying that a case may not be closed if the remaining level of contamination is likely to cause an exceedance of a vapor action level in indoor air;
- Including language that requires property owners to inform any purchaser if continuing obligations exist; and
- Providing detailed language of those situations where the closure letter must specify the on-going continuing obligations.

NR 727: Continuing Obligation Requirements and Reopening Closed Cases – This is a new rule that includes the following provisions:

- Requirements the property owners must comply with when one or more continuing obligations have been imposed;
- Specifies those situations where the property owner must notify the agency with administrative authority before making changes that may affect a continuing obligation;
- Direction for updating previously recorded groundwater use restrictions or deed restrictions as well as identifying the process that must be followed when modifying or removing a site from the Department's database;
- A section identifying when review fees are required for changing the database or an existing restriction; and
- The section on reopening closed cases (formerly s. NR 706.09) has been expanded to allow for reopening cases if a property owner fails to comply with closure requirements imposed by the Department, and also if the responsible party or current property owner requests the site be reopened.

NR 728: Enforcement and Compliance Authorities – The most significant change to this rule is in s. NR 728.10. That section allows the Department to put a site on our database if the responsible party has failed to take the necessary response action, following a 30-day notice. Section NR 728.11 has been retained so the Department also has the authority to file deed

affidavits on properties where contamination has been identified but an adequate investigation or remediation has not been implemented.

Other changes to this rule include:

- The title has been changed to identify that this rule also covers compliance issues that are not necessarily enforcement related;
- The rule language and associated definition were revised by replacing the word “contract” with “agreement” in order to provide a broader definition that covers all of the options available;
- A section entitled “Fees related to enforcement actions” was added to clarify the Department now has authority to assess and collect fees for persons subject to an order. This authority is provided under section 292.94 of the statutes; and
- An additional provision was added to section NR 728.09 to cover those situations where an order is necessary to prevent the discharge of a hazardous substance. This authority is provided under section 292.11(4) of the statutes.

NR 734: Selecting and Contracting Environmental Consulting Services - The major change to this rule is the replacement of the word "advertisement" with the term "public notice". This change was made because the procedures associated with advertising for proposals is more time consuming and does not result in a better final product. In addition, advertising for proposals is not required by statute. The rule also increases the cost limit that requires signature by the Governor from \$30,000 to \$60,000 and has several minor editorial changes.

NR 736: Public Notice, Bidding, and Award of Environmental Construction Contracts - Several of the changes made to ch. NR 734 are also included in this rule. This includes replacing the word "advertisement" with the term "public notice" and changing the contract amount for when this chapter applies from \$30,000 to \$60,000. Several other minor editorial changes were also made.

NR 738: Temporary Emergency Water Supplies - The most significant change to this rule was the addition of language that incorporates modifications to the statute dealing with damage to water supplies (s. 281.77, Stats.). Other changes include: revising the order of the sections to make the requirements easier to follow and adding several definitions, including: "Livestock", "Livestock Water Supply" and "Private Water Supply".

NR 746: Agency Roles and Responsibilities for Petroleum Contaminated Sites – All of the technical provisions in the rule have been removed. The primary reason for removing this language is that DNR rarely uses this rule to evaluate or close petroleum contaminated sites because in order to be eligible, a site must meet the risk screening criteria contained in s. NR 746.06. However, petroleum contaminated sites that meet the definition of high risk almost always do not meet the risk screening criteria and therefore can not pursue closure under ch. NR 746. In addition, a number of the Table 1 and 2 values in ch. NR 746 needed revising and removing the tables altogether will avoid this problem in the future. Finally, Appendix A, which contains the provisions for utilizing statistical tests to determine the effectiveness of natural attenuation, was removed due to several technical problems associated with the use of these tests.

The rule language related to the procedural process that must be followed by DNR and the Department of Safety and Professional Services includes several minor modifications, but in general was retained. This includes: tracking site progress, classification and transfer of sites, staff training, and dispute resolution.

Note: As part of the 2013-15 biennial budget, the Petroleum Environmental Cleanup Fund Award (PECFA) Program was transferred to DNR's Remediation and Redevelopment Program. This included technical staff overseeing low and medium risk petroleum sites and financial staff overseeing the reimbursement component of PECFA. As a result, this rule will be significantly revised or possibly eliminated in the future.

NR 749: Fees for Providing Assistance; Remediation and Redevelopment Program – The major change to this rule is an increase in the fees of approximately 40%. The fees have not been changed since they were originally promulgated in September, 1998 and this change represents an average annual increase of about 2.5% per year.

Several other changes include:

- Adding a section (s. NR 749.05) that provides responsible parties and others with the option to pay an hourly fee for project oversight as part of a negotiated agreement;
- Clarification that DNR has the ability to require payment of fees as part of negotiated agreements or enforcement actions in accordance with s. 292.94(d) of the statutes; and
- Reorganizing the fee table to group the type of assistance provided into similar categories.

A one-page summary of the ch. NR 749 fees is available at:
dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/rr/RR966.pdf.

NR 750: Fees for Providing Oversight for the Contaminated Land Recycling Program – A number of changes have been made to this chapter including:

- Removing or modifying a number of definitions;
- Requiring applicants to provide a copy of the property deed and a map showing the boundaries of the property as part of the initial application;
- Adding language that would allow the Department to withdraw the applicant from the process if reasonable progress on the site investigation and remediation is not made;
- Providing notification to the Department any time the property boundaries change but no later than 60 days prior to submitting a request for a certificate of completion;
- Increasing the advanced deposit; and
- Clarifying that payment of fees is required for sites added to the GIS Registry.

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