

“Contained-Out” Values for PCE, TCE and Vinyl Chloride

EPA’s guidance specifies that while contaminated media is itself not a hazardous waste, it may require management as hazardous waste if it contains a listed hazardous waste. The guidance goes on to indicate that media containing hazardous constituents above health based numbers are considered to contain hazardous waste.

In 2002, DNR developed detailed guidance for addressing situations where environmental media are or may be contaminated with hazardous waste. One of the most useful tools identified in the guidance is the concept of “contained-out” determinations. This concept allows contaminated environmental media to be managed as a solid waste if the contaminant concentrations in the media are below health based numbers. DNR has long relied on EPA web based calculators to determine the appropriate health based numbers for soil.

Values as of November 1, 2013

DNR has transitioned to the EPA Regional Screening Level Web Calculator for calculating soil residual contaminant levels (RCLs) and recently evaluated how the new calculator affected the contained-out numbers for three of the most common constituents (see Table 1 for a comparison of values).

For those situations where a Responsible Party has used the previous TCE value to develop a remedial action

plan for addressing contaminated soil but has not yet formally implemented the project, the Department will continue to allow this number to be used for making the “contained-out” determination. If there are questions on what constitutes “developing a remedial action plan,” contact your project manager to determine which TCE level applies to your particular project.

Other Applicable Requirements

The “contained-out” option addresses contamination from releases of listed hazardous wastes or commercial chemical products. However, contaminated media can also be considered a hazardous waste if it exhibits a hazardous characteristic including ignitability, reactivity, corrosivity or toxicity. The characteristic most likely to apply to contaminated soil is toxicity, which is determined by the Toxicity Characteristic Leaching Procedure (TCLP). If soil exhibits a hazardous characteristic it may be possible to treat the material so the characteristic is removed. The Department’s guidance entitled: “Guidance for Hazardous Waste Remediation” provides more detailed information on the various options available. The document is available at: dnr.wi.gov/files/PDF/pubs/rr/RR705.pdf.

If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact your DNR project manager, or Judy Fassbender at 608-266-7278.

Compound	Value prior to Nov. 2013 (mg/kg)	Value effective Nov. 2013 (mg/kg)
PCE	33	153
TCE	14	8.8
Vinyl Chloride	0.87	2

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, P.O. Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707, dnr.wi.gov, search “Brownfields”



This document contains information about certain state statutes and administrative rules but does not necessarily include all of the details found in the statutes and rules. Readers should consult the actual language of the statutes and rules to answer specific questions. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources provides equal opportunity in its employment, programs, services, and functions under an Affirmative Action Plan. If you have any questions, please write to Equal Opportunity Office, Department of Interior, Washington, D.C. 20240.