

# Tank Site Remediation Program – Questions and Answers

August 25, 2006

## **Q. Who is eligible for funding in the program?**

- A. Eligible applicants include municipalities and owners of small retail gas stations that meet the eligibility criteria of the previous program. Small retail gas station operations are those owners with five or fewer retail fuel sites. To be eligible, sites must have a tank that was installed prior to the Alberta Fire Code amendments of September 1, 1992.

The priority is to help complete the remediation of sites from the previous program. Participants whose sites were found to be heavily contaminated, and whose remediation costs exceed the initial base grant of \$110,000, may be eligible for up to an additional \$50,000 per site to help complete remediation. In addition, site owners who paid more than the original grant funding limit to complete remediation may be reimbursed, up to the same additional amount.

Applications will also be available for new participants to the program.

## **Q. Who is not eligible for funding in the program?**

- A. As in the previous program, eligibility does not include large retailers. This is because these owners are generally in a more viable financial position to fund remediation of their own sites. The program does not cover sites that have been out of service for more than two years (two years from when their Petroleum Tank Management Association of Alberta tank registration expired), unless they are within:
- 500m of a water well
  - 200m of surface water
  - 150m of a major underground structure
  - One of 23 municipalities with sensitive groundwater resources

Also ineligible are non-retail operations, for example trucking operations, bulk fuel plants, and municipally owned-and-operated refuelling depots.

## **Q. Why are owners from the first program receiving an additional up to \$50,000?**

- A. In many cases, site remediation costs for more heavily contaminated sites exceeded the original base grant of \$110,000 for site assessment and remediation. The additional funding of up to a maximum of \$50,000 will help complete the remediation of more heavily contaminated sites, and it will reimburse those who completed this work at their own expense.

## **Q. How much funding is available?**

- A. The program has \$50 million available. The maximum total grant for any site is \$160,000. This includes the up to \$110,000 that an applicant may have received in the first program.

## **Q. It will cost more than \$160,000 to remediate my site. Can I apply for more funding?**

- A. The goal of the tank site remediation program is to provide financial assistance to owners to help remediate their contaminated sites. The maximum total grant for each site is \$160,000, including funding for both the environmental site assessment and remediation.

**Q. How much will my environmental site assessment cost?**

- A. An environmental site assessment (ESA) averages about \$10,000 to drill and sample the area around the underground tank(s) and piping. More heavily contaminated sites may require additional drilling and sampling to find out the extent of contamination, increasing the cost of the ESA proportionately to the amount of contamination.

**Q. Why are environmental site assessments required?**

- A. Before remediation can begin, it is important to conduct an environmental site assessment to determine if there is contamination on the site that needs to be cleaned up.

To develop an effective cleanup plan, it is first necessary to determine the full extent of contamination. Without this information, consultants would not be able to accurately establish clean-up costs or select the most cost-effective approach for remediation.

**Q. How do I apply for funding?**

- A. Participants from the first program who may be eligible for additional funding will be notified of the new program directly by mail. Applications will also be available for new participants to the program. The application forms will be available starting **September 15**, and new site applications will be processed in the order they are received.

Program information is available on the Municipal Affairs website at [municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca](http://municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca). If participants require more information, they can call 1-866-833-3300 toll-free.

**Q. How will I find out if my application has been approved?**

- A. When the program office receives an application, staff will send a letter to the applicant indicating whether they have been accepted into the program. If the application is approved, the letter will include the assigned file number and a program contact person. The applicant may contact this person to check on the status of their application or with any questions they have about the program.

**Q. If my application is approved, what are the next steps?**

- A. A Conditional Grant Agreement (CGA) will be sent for you to review, sign and return to the program office. The CGA will then be signed by the Minister's representative and returned to the applicant. The applicant will proceed to retain the services of a qualified consultant, who will provide the necessary expertise to remediate the site. Program staff will provide guidance on selecting a consultant, and they can answer questions about the program and your responsibilities.

**Q. If I am approved for the program, how and when will I receive funding?**

- A. Funding for your site(s) will be allocated after the Conditional Grant Agreement (CGA) has been executed by both the applicant and the Minister's representative. The CGA provides that Alberta Municipal Affairs will pay invoices for work carried out remediating the site. As invoices are received, verified and approved, remediation costs are paid. The owner does not receive the funding directly.

**Q. Once my site is remediated, what confirmation will I receive?**

A. The program requires owners to retain the services of an accredited consulting engineer of their choice. This consultant must be registered with the Association of Professional Engineers, Geologists and Geophysicists of Alberta (APEGGA). The consulting engineer will provide the owner with reports documenting the results of their environmental site assessment and the remediation work.

**Q. How will I know if my site meets government standards?**

A. Alberta Environment will introduce remediation certificates for petroleum storage tanks in the fall. Remediation certificates are documents issued to applicants to confirm that a contaminated area has been cleaned up to meet Alberta Environment's standards.

**Q. Am I responsible for off-site contamination from my tank?**

A. Yes. Alberta Environment requires owners to clean all soil and groundwater contamination caused by their fuel operations, regardless of whether it is found on- or off-site. Any owners who believe their sites did not cause contamination detected on adjacent properties must present supporting evidence to Alberta Environment.

**Q. I know I have a leaking tank. What should I do?**

A. First, you should take the necessary action to stop the leak. The Alberta Fire Code contains procedures for spills and leaks that are to be followed to make the situation safe. These procedures include notifying the fire department. Information on purchasing a copy of the fire code is available online at [www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/ss\\_Fire.htm](http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/ss_Fire.htm).

**Q. If I am not approved for funding under the program, do I still have to remediate my contaminated tank site?**

A. The *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* requires owners of contaminated properties to clean them up to established environmental standards. Alberta Environment administers this legislation.

**Q. How can I find out more?**

A. For more information about the tank site remediation program, please visit the Alberta Municipal Affairs website at [www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca](http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca), or call the tank site remediation program office toll-free at 1-866-833-3300.