Radioactive Contaminated Land

Asiantaeth yr Amgylchedd Cymru Environment Agency Wales

Voluntary remediation of land

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Land owners and other interested parties may wish to remediate land contaminated with radioactivity voluntarily. There are several reasons for this: they may suspect it might be 'radioactive contaminated land' under the Part 2A regime, they may wish to develop it in the future, or they wish to maximise its commercial potential. In this context, we define voluntary remediation as the remediation/clean up of land that isn't driven by regulatory action or involvement.

We always encourage voluntary remediation of land contaminated with radioactivity if it will have benefits in reducing health or wider environmental impacts. However, we don't provide detailed advice to landowners or other parties on the remediation process. We only comment on those aspects relating to the requirements of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2010 (EPR10) for accumulation and disposal of radioactive waste arising from proposed clean-up work.

If you are considering remediating land contaminated with radioactivity, Briefing Notes 3 and 4 provide some useful guidance and advice. You can also find further guidance and a list of commercial consultants with experience in this field by going to SAFEGROUNDS Learning Network web site (www.safegrounds.com).

EPR10 defines the level of radioactivity required for materials to be considered as radioactive waste. We don't consider EPR10 allows for the direct regulation of land contaminated with radioactivity. However, the accumulation and disposal of excavated contaminated soil would require regulation, if the levels of radioactivity were high enough. Many land owners choose to remediate the land to levels of contamination low enough so any soil excavated in the future won't require regulation under EPR10.

For this reason, people such as developers or those responsible for remediating radioactive contaminated land under the extended Part 2A regime may also choose to remediate land to these levels, even though this would not otherwise be required.