



DEPARTMENT OF TOXIC
SUBSTANCES CONTROL

December 2004
Brownfields Workshop

Program Highlights

Statutory Authority:
California Education
Code sections
17072.13, 17072.18,
17210, 17210.1,
17213.1, 17213.2 and
17268.

**Number of Projects
(as of October 2004):**
Reviewed
environmental
assessments at over
1429 school sites in
395 districts throughout
California.

Approximately 877
properties cleared for
construction of schools.

Currently overseeing
work at over 325
proposed school sites

School Site Cleanups

Beginning January 1, 2000, proposed school sites seeking state funding for acquisition and/or construction are required to go through a comprehensive environmental review and cleanup process under DTSC oversight. This ensures that selected properties are either free of contamination or that they are cleaned up to a level that is protective of the students and faculty who will occupy the new school. All proposed school sites must be suitable for residential land use, which is DTSC's most protective standard for children.

The steps of the process are as follows:

Step One: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (Phase I). This is a review of public and private records and a site visit to determine if there has been a release or there is a threatened release of a hazardous material, or if there may be a naturally-occurring hazardous material present at the site, that may pose a risk to human health or the environment. Once the Phase I report is received, DTSC has thirty days to issue either a no action letter or recommended further action.

Step Two: Preliminary Environmental Assessment. If the Phase I indicates a potential for a hazardous materials release or the presence of naturally-occurring hazardous materials, the school district performs a Preliminary Endangerment Assessment (also known as a Preliminary Environmental Assessment or PEA). The PEA includes the collection and laboratory analysis of environmental samples and assesses the potential risk to public health and the environment posed by the chemicals detected. If the assessment identifies no significant health or environmental risk, the district receives a "No Further Action" determination letter from DTSC.

Step Three: Response Action. If the approved PEA concludes that the property has contamination which requires additional investigation and cleanup, the school district can either investigate and clean up the property under DTSC oversight or it can elect not to proceed with the acquisition or construction project.

If the school district elects to acquire the schoolsite or proceed with construction, the investigation and cleanup actions would follow DTSC's cleanup process for contaminated sites (under Health and Safety Code, Division 20, Chapter 6.8). Response actions may include the following:

- Collection of additional environmental samples in a supplemental site investigation (if necessary).
- Preparation of a response action plan (i.e., Removal Action Workplan or Feasibility Study and Remedial Action Plan) that undergoes public review and comment before its final approval.
- Implementation of the response action plan.
- Issuance of a "No Further Action" determination letter from DTSC and certification of site.

For more information, please see DTSC's webpage at:

<http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/Schools/index.cfm>