

Figure: 30 TAC §350.77(b)

### TIER 1: EXCLUSION CRITERIA CHECKLIST

This exclusion criteria checklist is intended to aid the person and the TCEQ in determining whether or not further ecological evaluation is necessary at an affected property where a response action is being pursued under the Texas Risk Reduction Program (TRRP). Exclusion criteria refer to those conditions at an affected property which preclude the need for a formal ecological risk assessment (ERA) because there are **incomplete or insignificant ecological exposure pathways** due to the nature of the affected property setting and/or the condition of the affected property media. This checklist (and/or a Tier 2 or 3 ERA or the equivalent) must be completed by the person for all affected property subject to the TRRP. The person should be familiar with the affected property but need not be a professional scientist in order to respond, although some questions will likely require contacting a wildlife management agency (i.e., Texas Parks and Wildlife Department or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). The checklist is designed for general applicability to all affected property; however, there may be unusual circumstances which require professional judgement in order to determine the need for further ecological evaluation (e.g., cave-dwelling receptors). In these cases, the person is strongly encouraged to contact TCEQ before proceeding.

Besides some preliminary information, the checklist consists of three major parts, **each of which must be completed unless otherwise instructed**. PART I requests affected property identification and background information. PART II contains the actual exclusion criteria and supportive information. PART III is a qualitative summary statement and a certification of the information provided by the person. **Answers should reflect existing conditions and should not consider future remedial actions at the affected property**. Completion of the checklist should lead to a logical conclusion as to whether further evaluation is warranted. Definitions of terms used in the checklist have been provided and users are strongly encouraged to familiarize themselves with these definitions before beginning the checklist.

Name of Facility:

Affected Property Location:

Mailing Address:

TCEQ Case Tracking #s:

Solid Waste Registration #s:

Voluntary Cleanup Program #:

EPA I.D. #s:

#### Definitions<sup>1</sup>

**Affected property** - The entire area (i.e., on-site and off-site; including all environmental media) which contains releases of chemicals of concern at concentrations equal to or greater than the assessment level applicable for residential land use and groundwater classification.

**Assessment level** - A critical protective concentration level for a chemical of concern used for affected property assessments where the human health protective concentration level is established under a Tier 1 evaluation as described in §350.75(b) of this title (relating to Tiered Human Health Protective Concentration Level Evaluation), except for the protective concentration level for the soil-to-groundwater exposure pathway which may be established under Tier 1, 2, or 3 as described in §350.75(i)(7) of this title, and ecological protective concentration levels which are developed, when necessary, under Tier 2 and/or 3 in accordance with §350.77(c) and/or (d), respectively, of this title (relating to Ecological Risk Assessment and Development of Ecological Protective Concentration Levels).

**Bedrock** - The solid rock (i.e., consolidated, coherent, and relatively hard naturally formed material that cannot normally be excavated by manual methods alone) that underlies gravel, soil or other surficial material.

**Chemical of concern** - Any chemical that has the potential to adversely affect ecological or human receptors due to its concentration, distribution, and mode of toxicity. Depending on the program area, chemicals of concern may include the following: solid waste, industrial solid waste, municipal solid waste, and hazardous waste as defined in Texas Health and Safety Code, §361.003, as amended; hazardous constituents as listed in 40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 261, Appendix VIII, as amended; constituents on the groundwater monitoring list in 40 Code of Federal Regulations Part 264, Appendix IX, as amended; constituents as listed in 40 CFR Part 258 Appendices I and II, as amended; pollutant as defined in Texas Water Code, §26.001, as amended; hazardous substance as defined in Texas Health and Safety Code, §361.003, as amended, and the Texas Water Code, §26.263, as amended; other substances as defined in Texas Water Code, §26.039(a), as amended; and daughter products of the aforementioned constituents.

**Community** - An assemblage of plant and animal populations occupying the same habitat in which the various species interact via spatial and trophic relationships (e.g., a desert community or a pond community).

**Complete exposure pathway** - An exposure pathway where a human or ecological receptor is exposed to a chemical of concern via an exposure route (e.g., incidental soil ingestion, inhalation of volatiles and particulates, consumption of prey, etc).

**De minimus** - The description of an area of affected property comprised of one acre or less where the ecological risk is considered to be insignificant because of the small extent of contamination, the absence of protected species, the availability of similar unimpacted habitat nearby, and the lack of adjacent sensitive environmental areas.

**Ecological protective concentration level** - The concentration of a chemical of concern at the point of exposure within an exposure medium (e.g., soil, sediment, groundwater, or surface water) which is determined in accordance with §350.77(c) or (d) of this title (relating to Ecological Risk Assessment and Development of Ecological Protective Concentration Levels) to be protective for ecological receptors. These concentration levels are primarily intended to be protective for more mobile or wide-ranging ecological receptors and, where appropriate, benthic invertebrate communities within the waters in the state. These concentration levels are not intended to be directly protective of receptors with limited mobility or range (e.g., plants, soil invertebrates, and small rodents), particularly those residing within active areas of a facility, unless these receptors are threatened/endangered species or unless impacts to these receptors result in disruption of the ecosystem or other unacceptable consequences for the more mobile or wide-ranging receptors (e.g., impacts to an off-site grassland habitat eliminate rodents which causes a desirable owl population to leave the area).

**Ecological risk assessment** - The process that evaluates the likelihood that adverse ecological effects may occur or are occurring as a result of exposure to one or more stressors; however, as used in this context, only chemical stressors (i.e., COCs) are evaluated.

**Environmental medium** - A material found in the natural environment such as soil (including non-waste fill materials), groundwater, air, surface water, and sediments, or a mixture of such materials with liquids, sludges, gases, or solids, including hazardous waste which is inseparable by simple mechanical removal processes, and is made up primarily of natural environmental material.

**Exclusion criteria** - Those conditions at an affected property which preclude the need to establish a protective concentration level for an ecological exposure pathway because the exposure pathway between the chemical of concern and the ecological receptors is not complete or is insignificant.

**Exposure medium** - The environmental medium or biologic tissue in which or by which exposure to chemicals of concern by ecological or human receptors occurs.

**Facility** - The installation associated with the affected property where the release of chemicals of concern occurred.

**Functioning cap** - A low permeability layer or other approved cover meeting its design specifications to minimize water infiltration and chemical of concern migration, and prevent ecological or human receptor exposure to chemicals of concern, and whose design requirements are routinely maintained.

**Landscaped area** - An area of ornamental, or introduced, or commercially installed, or manicured vegetation which is routinely maintained.

**Off-site property (off-site)** - All environmental media which is outside of the legal boundaries of the on-site property.

**On-site property (on-site)** - All environmental media within the legal boundaries of a property owned or leased by a person who has filed a self-implementation notice or a response action plan for that property or who has become subject to such action through one of the agency's program areas for that property.

**Physical barrier** - Any structure or system, natural or manmade, that prevents exposure or prevents migration of chemicals of concern to the points of exposure.

**Point of exposure** - The location within an environmental medium where a receptor will be assumed to have a reasonable potential to come into contact with chemicals of concern. The point of exposure may be a discrete point, plane, or an area within or beyond some location.

**Protective concentration level** - The concentration of a chemical of concern which can remain within the source medium and not result in levels which exceed the applicable human health risk-based exposure limit or ecological protective concentration level at the point of exposure for that exposure pathway.

**Release** - Any spilling, leaking, pumping, pouring, emitting, emptying, discharging, injecting, escaping, leaching, dumping, or disposing into the environment, with the exception of:

(A) A release that results in an exposure to a person solely within a workplace, concerning a claim that the person may assert against the person's employer;

(B) An emission from the engine exhaust of a motor vehicle, rolling stock, aircraft, vessel, or pipeline pumping station engine;

(C) A release of source, by-product, or special nuclear material from a nuclear incident, as those terms are defined by the Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended (42 U.S.C. §2011 *et seq.*), if the release is subject to requirements concerning financial protection established by the Nuclear Regulatory Commission under §170 of that Act;

(D) For the purposes of the environmental response law §104, as amended, or other response action, a release of source, by-product, or special nuclear material from a processing site designated under §102(a)(1) or §302(a) of the Uranium Mill Tailings Radiation Control Act of 1978 (42 U.S.C. §7912 and §7942), as amended; and

(E) The normal application of fertilizer.

**Sediment** - Non-suspended particulate material lying below surface waters such as bays, the ocean, rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, or other similar surface water body (including intermittent streams). Dredged sediments which have been removed from below surface water bodies and placed on land shall be considered soils.

**Sensitive environmental areas** - Areas that provide unique and often protected habitat for wildlife species. These areas are typically used during critical life stages such as breeding, hatching, rearing of young, and overwintering. Examples include critical habitat for threatened and endangered species, wilderness areas, parks, and wildlife refuges.

**Source medium** - An environmental medium containing chemicals of concern which must be removed, decontaminated and/or controlled in order to protect human health and the environment. The source medium may be the exposure medium for some exposure pathways.

**Stressor** - Any physical, chemical, or biological entity that can induce an adverse response; however, as used in this context, only chemical entities apply.

**Subsurface soil** - For human health exposure pathways, the portion of the soil zone between the base of surface soil and the top of the groundwater-bearing unit(s). For ecological exposure pathways, the portion of the soil zone between 0.5 feet and 5 feet in depth.

**Surface cover** - A layer of artificially placed utility material (e.g., shell, gravel).

**Surface soil** - For human health exposure pathways, the soil zone extending from ground surface to 15 feet in depth for residential land use and from ground surface to 5 feet in depth for commercial/industrial land use; or to the top of the uppermost groundwater-bearing unit or bedrock, whichever is less in depth. For ecological exposure pathways, the soil zone extending from ground surface to 0.5 feet in depth.

**Surface water** - Any water meeting the definition of surface water in the state as defined in §307.3 of this title (relating to Abbreviations and Definitions), as amended.

**PART I. Affected Property Identification and Background Information**

1) Provide a description of the specific area of the response action and the nature of the release. Include estimated acreage of the affected property and the facility property, and a description of the type of facility and/or operation associated with the affected property. Also describe the location of the affected property with respect to the facility property boundaries and public roadways.

Attach available USGS topographic maps and/or aerial or other affected property photographs to this form to depict the affected property and surrounding area. Indicate attachments:

- Topo map
- Aerial photo
- Other

2) Identify environmental media known or suspected to contain chemicals of concern (COCs) at the present time. Check all that apply:

- | Known/Suspected COC Location                             | Based on sampling data?      |                             |
|--|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil ≤5 ft below ground surface | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Soil >5 ft below ground surface | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Groundwater                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Surface Water/Sediments         | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes | <input type="checkbox"/> No |

Explain (previously submitted information may be referenced):

3) Provide the information below for the nearest surface water body which has become or has the potential to become impacted from migrating COCs via surface water runoff, air deposition, groundwater seepage, etc. Exclude wastewater treatment facilities and storm water conveyances/impoundments authorized by permit. Also exclude conveyances, decorative ponds, and those portions of process facilities which are:

a. Not in contact with surface waters in the State or other surface waters which are ultimately in contact with surface waters in the State; and

b. Not consistently or routinely utilized as valuable habitat for natural communities including birds, mammals, reptiles, etc.

The nearest surface water body is \_\_\_\_\_ feet/miles from the affected property and is named \_\_\_\_\_. The water body is best described as a:

- freshwater stream: \_\_\_\_\_ perennial (has water all year)  
\_\_\_\_\_ intermittent (dries up completely for at least 1 week a year)  
\_\_\_\_\_ intermittent with perennial pools
- freshwater swamp/marsh/wetland
- saltwater or brackish marsh/swamp/wetland
- reservoir, lake, or pond; approximate surface acres: \_\_\_\_\_
- drainage ditch
- tidal stream  bay  estuary
- other; specify \_\_\_\_\_

Is the water body listed as a State classified segment in Appendix C of the current Texas Surface Water Quality Standards; §§307.1 - 307.10?

Yes Segment # \_\_\_\_\_ Use Classification:

No

If the water body is not a State classified segment, identify the first downstream classified segment.

Name:

Segment #:

Use Classification:

As necessary, provide further description of surface waters in the vicinity of the affected property:

## **PART II. Exclusion Criteria and Supportive Information**

### **Subpart A. Surface Water/Sediment Exposure**

1) Regarding the affected property where a response action is being pursued under the TRRP, have COCs migrated and resulted in a release or imminent threat of release to either surface waters or to their associated sediments via surface water runoff, air deposition, groundwater seepage, etc.? Exclude wastewater treatment facilities and storm water conveyances/impoundments authorized by permit. Also exclude conveyances, decorative ponds, and those portions of process facilities which are:

a. Not in contact with surface waters in the State or other surface waters which are ultimately in contact with surface waters in the State; and

b. Not consistently or routinely utilized as valuable habitat for natural communities including birds, mammals, reptiles, etc.

Yes             No

Explain:

If the answer is Yes to Subpart A above, the affected property does not meet the exclusion criteria. However, complete the remainder of Part II to determine if there is a complete and/or significant soil exposure pathway, then complete PART III - Qualitative Summary and Certification. If the answer is No, go to Subpart B.

### **Subpart B. Affected Property Setting**

In answering "Yes" to the following question, it is understood that the affected property is not attractive to wildlife or livestock, including threatened or endangered species (i.e., the affected property does not serve as valuable habitat, foraging area, or refuge for ecological communities). (May require consultation with wildlife management agencies.)

1) Is the affected property wholly contained within contiguous land characterized by: pavement, buildings, landscaped area, functioning cap, roadways, equipment storage area, manufacturing or process area, other surface cover or structure, or otherwise disturbed ground?

Yes             No

Explain:

If the answer to Subpart B above is Yes, the affected property meets the exclusion criteria, assuming the answer to Subpart A was No. Skip Subparts C and D and complete PART III - Qualitative Summary and Certification. If the answer to Subpart B above is No, go to Subpart C.

### **Subpart C. Soil Exposure**

1) Are COCs which are in the soil of the affected property solely below the first 5 feet beneath ground surface **or** does the affected property have a physical barrier present to prevent exposure of receptors to COCs in surface soil?

Yes             No

Explain:

If the answer to Subpart C above is Yes, the affected property meets the exclusion criteria, assuming the answer to Subpart A was No. Skip Subpart D and complete PART III - Qualitative Summary and Certification. If the answer to Subpart C above is No, proceed to Subpart D.

### **Subpart D. *De Minimus* Land Area**

In answering "Yes" to the question below, it is understood that all of the following conditions apply:

The affected property is not known to serve as habitat, foraging area, or refuge to threatened/endangered or otherwise protected species. (Will likely require consultation with wildlife management agencies.)

Similar but unimpacted habitat exists within a half-mile radius.

The affected property is not known to be located within one-quarter mile of sensitive environmental areas (e.g., rookeries, wildlife management areas, preserves). (Will likely require consultation with wildlife management agencies.)

There is no reason to suspect that the COCs associated with the affected property will migrate such that the affected property will become larger than one acre.

1) Using human health protective concentration levels as a basis to determine the extent of the COCs, does the affected property consist of one acre or less and does it meet all of the conditions above?

Yes             No

Explain how conditions are met/not met:

If the answer to Subpart D above is Yes, then no further ecological evaluation is needed at this affected property, assuming the answer to Subpart A was No. Complete PART III - Qualitative Summary and Certification. If the answer to Subpart D above is No, proceed to Tier 2 or 3 or comparable ERA.

**PART III. Qualitative Summary and Certification (Complete in all cases.)**

Attach a brief statement (not to exceed 1 page) summarizing the information you have provided in this form. This summary should include sufficient information to verify that the affected property meets or does not meet the exclusion criteria. The person should make the initial decision regarding the need for further ecological evaluation (i.e., Tier 2 or 3) based upon the results of this checklist. After review, TCEQ will make a final determination on the need for further assessment. **Note that the person has the continuing obligation to re-enter the ERA process if changing circumstances result in the affected property not meeting the Tier 1 exclusion criteria.**

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_ (Typed/Printed Name)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Title)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

I believe that the information submitted is true, accurate, and complete, to the best of my knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_ (Typed/Printed Name of Person)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Title of Person)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of Person)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date Signed)

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**1 These definitions were taken from 30 TAC §350.4 and may have both ecological and human health applications. For the purpose of this checklist, it is understood that only the ecological applications are of concern.**