

PCA Guidance Note

Verification Reports Following Excavation



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Background

This Guidance Note has been produced to help PCA members and others comply with their obligations in respect of land remediation i.e. excavation and re-location or removal of soils etc. as part of a Management plan to remove Invasive non-native plants including Japanese knotweed. Detailed advice on Waste Classification, Re-using waste soils, Safe and Effective Excavations and the use of Root Barriers are given in the PCA's document library available at www.property-care.org

Why provide a Verification Report?

A comprehensive verification report provides confidence to a client, the regulatory authorities, and prospective purchasers of remediated land that works were undertaken diligently and professionally. It also acts as protection to a contractor if any future claim is made and the verification report can provide evidence that the claim is unsubstantiated. A verification report will also act in collating and retaining legally required information, specifically the movement of waste materials, by either demonstrating that they have been re-used appropriately and have ceased to be a waste or that they have been disposed of correctly under the appropriate duty of care.

When is a Verification Report required?

A verification report is required when excavation of INNS is undertaken as the arisings are considered a waste and, in cases where there is a risk of re-growth ("contains propagules"), the arisings are considered a controlled waste (for all INNS listed under Schedule 9: Section 14 of The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 as amended, or corresponding Regulations in devolved administrations). The PCA's guidance entitled 'Re-using Waste Soils on a Commercial Site' provides further detail on the requirements of re-using INNS impacted soils at a site and this guidance provides details on how these works and off-site disposal works should be recorded. The Environment Agency's RPS 178, setting-down the conditions under which a permit for soil re-use may be waived, is published on line at www.gov.uk and should be checked regularly for updates.

Information to record in a Verification Report

Contacts List

A contact lists for the client; project team; key consultees; sub-contractors and waste receiving sites should be provided for future reference.

Historical Reports

A table of references should be provided for key reports, for example:

1. The original site survey;
2. INNS Management Plan;
3. Report justifying the re-use of soils at a site; and
4. Bio-security risk assessment.

Where required the findings of key reports should be summarised in the verification report with relevant extracts, such as the original survey drawing, provided in an Appendix. However, complete reproduction of these documents should not provide the opening to a verification report as the purpose of the report is to record what has been done and not what was proposed. A common trait of verification reports identified by the author is for contractors to copy and paste their management plan into the report but, as the text is in the wrong tense, this distracts from the purpose of the verification report.

As-Built Works

This section should provide a detailed overview of the works undertaken, covering the following topics:

1. Biosecurity implemented prior to the works commencing;
2. Diary of the works undertaken each day with reference to a detailed daily photo survey within an Appendix;
3. A Table provided detailing volumes excavated from each location and a description of the strata encountered;
4. A description of how materials were handled/managed;
5. A description of where arisings such as Japanese knotweed contaminated soils were reused/stockpiled/buried, including volumes moved to each specific area if more than one stockpiling/deposition area was used. Sufficient evidence should be given such that material can be traced from excavation, to temporary stockpiling, to final deposition;
6. A review of chemical analysis undertaken of the soils including lab results provided in an Appendix;
7. Where off-site disposal is used, a Table should be provided detailing the volumes removed to each landfill receptor and the supporting duty of care and hauliers/receiving sites' environmental permit provided in an Appendix; and
8. A review of any works undertaken that was not part of the original planned works with a reasoning for the additional/change in works, justification of the new works and confirmation of the client's approval.

Residual Risks

A section should be provided discussing residual risks remaining at the site, for example a burial cell being compromised or an area of stockpiling that is to be monitored and treated. The residual risks should be described in full as well as the preventative measures required to prevent future outbreaks of INNSs at the site.

Drawings

Drawings are a key document for communicating the works undertaken during a project. Drawings are required to be on a scaled plan. The following drawings should be included in a verification report:

1. Original INNS survey;
2. Updated INNS survey prior to excavation, if applicable;
3. Accurate survey of the extent of the excavation(s);
4. Accurate survey of stockpiling areas; haul roads and deposition areas/burial cells/boundary barriers;
5. If applicable accurate surveys of constraints to the works, for example buried obstructions.

Appendices

The following information should be provided in an appendix to the main report:

1. Photo survey of the works, with a description for each photo;
2. Key documents/extracts of documents described in the main text;
3. Chemical analysis undertaken of the soils;
4. Hauliers and receiving sites environmental permits;
5. Duty of Care documents;
6. Copy of the guarantee; and
7. Copy of insurance documents.

Review of Risk Assessment

The original Survey Report and Management plan will have included a site Risk assessment. In the case of Japanese knotweed this would include a Risk category (RICS levels 1 - 4). Once the site is cleared a new report should be issued firstly once remediation has been completed then again once monitoring is finished. The extent of monitoring should be stated. The document must be cross-referenced in the Management plan so the reader knows how the results of the remediation will ultimately be communicated to them.



The information contained in this booklet is given in good faith and is believed to be correct. However, it must be stressed that of necessity it is of a general nature. The precise condition may alter in each individual case and the Association is therefore unable to accept responsibility for any loss howsoever arising from the use of the information contained therein.



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