



Standard Practice for Environmental Site Assessments: Phase I Environmental Site Assessment Process for Forestland or Rural Property¹

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1. Scope

1.1 *Purpose*—The purpose of this practice is to provide an alternative method to ASTM E1527 for good commercial and customary practice in the United States of America for conducting a *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment*² of *forestland* or *rural property* with respect to the range of contaminants within the scope of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) and *petroleum products*. As such, this practice is intended to permit a *user* to satisfy one of the requirements to qualify for the innocent landowner, contiguous *property owner*, or bona fide prospective purchaser limitations on CERCLA liability (hereinafter, the “*landowner liability protections*,” or “*LLPs*”): that is, the practice that constitutes “*all appropriate inquiries*” into the previous ownership and uses of the *property* consistent with good commercial or customary practice” as defined at 42 U.S.C. §9601(35)(B). (See [Appendix X1](#) for an outline of CERCLA’s liability and defense provisions.) Controlled substances are not included within the scope of this standard. Persons conducting an *environmental site assessment* as part of an EPA Brownfields Assessment and Characterization Grant awarded under CERCLA 42 U.S.C. §9604(k)(2)(B) must include controlled substances as defined in the Controlled Substances Act (21 U.S.C. §802) within the scope of the assessment investigations to the extent directed in the terms and conditions of the specific grant or cooperative agreement.

1.1.1 *Standard Practice Selection*—The methodology included in this practice is an effective and practical process for achieving the objectives of a *Phase I Environmental Site Assessment* of *forestland* or *rural property* when some of the methodologies of ASTM E1527 are deemed to be impractical or unnecessary due to the size or nature of the *property*. This practice is intended to provide a more practical approach to

assess rural and *forestland* properties that are generally uniform in use. A primary consideration in applying this practice instead of E1527 is the nature and extent of the *property* being assessed, as the typical environmental concerns, sources for *interviews* and records, and the methodology used to perform the *site reconnaissance* may differ significantly. The *property* to be assessed using this standard practice need not be contiguous and may contain isolated areas of non-*forestland* and non-*rural property*. *Site reconnaissance* of isolated areas of the *property* that include activities outside the definition of *forestland* or *rural property* should be addressed using methodologies such as those provided in E1527-13, which may be conducted and reported in conjunction with this practice, as discussed in section 4.5.3.

1.1.2 *Recognized Environmental Conditions*—In defining a standard of good commercial and customary practice for conducting an *environmental site assessment* of a parcel of *property*, the goal of the processes established by this practice is to identify *recognized environmental conditions*. The term *recognized environmental conditions* means the presence or likely presence of any *hazardous substances* or *petroleum products* in, on, or at a *property*: (1) due to any *release* to the *environment*; (2) under conditions indicative of a *release* to the *environment*; or (3) under conditions that pose a *material threat* of a future *release* to the *environment*. *De minimis conditions* are not *recognized environmental conditions*.

1.1.3 *Related Standard Practices*—This practice is closely related to Standard Practice E1527. Standard Practice E1527 is an *environmental site assessment* for *commercial real estate* (see 4.3).

1.1.4 *Petroleum Products*—*Petroleum products* are included within the scope of this practice because they are of concern with respect to many parcels of *forestland* or *rural property* and current custom and usage is to include an inquiry into the presence of *petroleum products* when doing an *environmental site assessment* of *forestland* or *rural property*. Inclusion of *petroleum products* within the scope of this practice is not based upon the applicability, if any, of CERCLA to *petroleum products*. (See [Appendix X1](#) for discussion of *petroleum exclusion* to CERCLA liability.)

¹ This practice is under the jurisdiction of ASTM Committee E50 on Environmental Assessment, Risk Management and Corrective Action and is the direct responsibility of Subcommittee E50.02 on Real Estate Assessment and Management.

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² All definitions, descriptions of terms, and acronyms are defined in Section 3. Whenever terms defined in 3.2 are used in this practice, they are in *italics*.