



County of Sacramento

DATE: November 30, 2020

TO: C-57 Contractors
Environmental Consultants
EMD website (<http://emd.saccounty.net>)

SUBJECT: EXPLORATORY BORINGS

This memorandum has been issued as a reminder to members of our regulated community that pursuant to the Sacramento County Code, Title 6, Chapter 6.28 (Wells and Pumps), the following provisions apply to “exploratory borings”:

Definition: An exploratory boring is “an uncased temporary excavation or boring drilled to a depth within ten (10) feet of groundwater, or deeper, based on available groundwater data, whose purpose is the immediate determination of hydrologic or geologic conditions at a site.” Groundwater depth information may be found on public websites such as DTSC’s “Envirostor” (www.envirostor.dtsc.ca.gov/public/) or DWR’s “Water Data Library” (www.water.ca.gov/waterdatalibrary/). If groundwater is encountered in an unpermitted soil boring after a good faith effort to determine the depth to groundwater, it is imperative that you contact EMD to obtain a permit. (SCC, Chapter 6.28, §6.28.010.O.6)

Permit Required: An EMD permit is required prior to advancing a regulated exploratory boring. A single permit application and fee (\$1,027) may be submitted for multiple exploratory borings if they will be completed as one project or in one mobilization. Staff time is billed to the project for permit approval, regulatory agency consultation, travel, inspection and database management. After the initial fee has been exhausted, the applicant shall be invoiced for the remaining staff time at the hourly rate approved by the Board of Supervisors (FY 2024-25 = \$232). (SCC, Chapter 6.28, §6.28.030.A)

Discovery of Contamination: If soil or groundwater contamination is detected in a regulated exploratory boring, EMD must be notified within 60 days of such detection. This requirement does not apply to sites that are actively overseen by EMD or State regulatory agencies such as DTSC and/or the CVRWQCB. (SCC, Chapter 6.28, §6.28.000.F)

Inspection Scheduling: The applicant is responsible for scheduling an EMD inspection of the preparation and placement of sealing material 24 hours prior to the requested time, via the well inspection line at (916) 875-8524. Additional notice is recommended if the inspection time falls outside normal business hours. Inspection requests outside normal business hours are subject to the following: (1) the applicant must agree to pay for inspection time at the overtime rate (1.5X standard); and (2) EMD must have an inspector willing to volunteer for an overtime assignment. (SCC, Chapter 6.28, §6.28.090.B)

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Sealing Exploratory Borings: Exploratory borings must be sealed completely with an acceptable sealing material from the bottom of the boring to the top (or to 5 feet below ground surface in areas where excavation, grading, farming, or trenching are possible – see “*Additional Requirements*” below). Acceptable sealing materials include neat cement, cement with up to 6% bentonite by weight, 10.3 sack sand cement slurry, concrete (with aggregate less than 1/5 the diameter of the boring) and bentonite chips or pellets, with EMD approval. Sealing material may be placed by free-fall only where the interval to be sealed is dry and no more than 30 feet in depth. A tremie device (pipe, hose, augers, rods) is required for sealing exploratory borings that are greater than 30 feet in depth or that have water present in them. The discharge end of the tremie device shall be continuously submerged in sealing material during sealing operations. (SCC, Chapter 6.28, §6.28.050.C.2.b)

Temporary Cover: Whenever work is interrupted by such events as overnight shutdown, poor weather, and required waiting periods to allow setting of sealing materials or the performance of tests, the opening to the exploratory boring shall be covered at the surface to ensure public safety and prevent the entrance of foreign material, water, and contaminants or pollutants. The cover shall be held in place or weighted down in such a manner that cannot be removed, except through the use of equipment or tools. In no case shall an exploratory boring be left unsealed longer than 14 days following its advancement to total depth. (SCC, Chapter 6.28, §6.28.050.C.2.f)

Additional Requirements: Most of the exploratory borings permitted in Sacramento County are being advanced in areas where excavation, grading, trenching or farming may occur. In order to provide a protective buffer between these activities and the sealing material, sealing material shall terminate at a depth of 5 feet below ground surface, and the upper 5 feet of the boring shall be backfilled with clean fill to 0-1 foot below grade, and finished to grade with the property owner’s or encroachment permit agency’s choice of material. The clean fill should have sufficient compactive effort applied to minimize settling and disruption of surfaces. (SCC, Chapter 6.28, §6.28.050.C.2.e)

Questions: Please call us at (916) 875-8400 if you have any questions about this information.