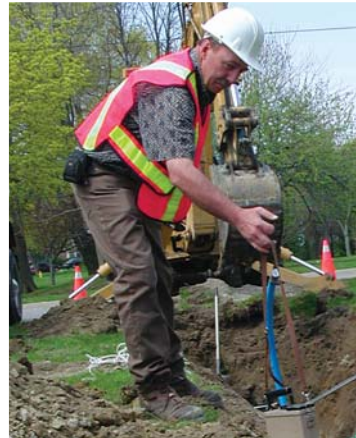


Before the cleanup begins...

LLRWMO field service staff hones skills daily, monitoring the local environment



Call before you dig...



Homeowners do their part by using the CMP

For an east end Port Hope homeowner, the Construction Monitoring Program (CMP) was a routine part of putting in a backyard pool. The first step was an application for a building permit. Municipal staff automatically sent the property owner to the LLRWMO to fill out a CMP application/consent form. LLRWMO staff checked the files for radiological information on the property, phoned to arrange a house call and, within a day, were at the property to conduct a surface soil scan where the pool would go. Paperwork to document the current property data was completed and the go-ahead faxed to the municipality.

About 235 Ward 1 property owners took advantage of the CMP before undertaking construction projects last year. The LLRWMO offers the service to help ensure soil is not moved from properties before being surveyed for historic low-level radioactive waste. If contamination is detected, the LLRWMO oversees its safe removal and transfer to the licensed Temporary Storage Site on Pine Street at no charge to homeowners.

Decades of experience and data applied every day

It came as no surprise to LLRWMO field service staff when a CMP survey at a Peacock Boulevard property revealed no signs of contaminated soil. In 20 years of CMP work, historic waste has never been found in that area. LLRWMO technical staff has studied thousands of property files and been involved in hundreds of large and small cleanups. Each day they apply their knowledge and amass more data, all of which will be used when the Port Hope Project cleanup begins.

“From one perspective what we’ve been doing here at the CMP over the past 24 years has allowed us to hone our skills and improve all of the procedures that will be used when the cleanup begins,” explains Technical Supervisor Michael Owen. “The clean-up methodologies, the principles of the health and safety plans and the instrumentation we will use are tried and tested approaches.” The scope of the Port Hope Project cleanup will be greater – an estimated 700,000 cubic metres of contaminated soil will be excavated in urban Port Hope – but the individual cleanups that comprise the Project will be similar to those carried out daily by LLRWMO staff. The same proven precautions to ensure worker and public safety and prevent dust and other environmental effects will be applied when the Port Hope Area Initiative cleanup begins.

What if a CMP survey detects contamination?

The vast majority of CMP visits find no evidence of contaminated soil. But what if a radiological survey detects elevated readings? Readings above typical background for Southern Ontario prompt further investigation. A technical specialist reviews the property file and, if warranted, a more detailed survey is completed that includes surface and sub-surface gamma radiation readings and soil sampling. Soil is sampled and analyzed at the LLRWMO John Street lab for radium-226, the key constituent of historic low-level radioactive waste. If contaminated soil is present where construction is taking place, LLRWMO staff oversees its removal and temporary storage at no cost to the homeowner.

Property letters keep homeowners up-to-date

Hardly a day goes by when the LLRWMO doesn’t issue a radiological status letter for a Ward 1 Port Hope property. The confidential letters provide a summary of radiation surveys and cleanups that may have been carried out on the property since the initial cleanup of 1976 to 1981. If a file does not exist, LLRWMO field service staff will conduct a radiological survey and create a file. Provided at no cost to homeowners, the letters are typically requested when a property changes hands or is being refinanced. Call 905-885-9488 to request a letter; for additional information ask for Technical Specialist Panthea Sarabi.