Contaminated Land

Sust. 27

What?

Many construction sites are on areas of land where there has been previous development or activity. Contamination of the ground may be caused by leaks or spills of hazardous chemicals or fuel, old structures or inappropriate disposal of waste. Contamination can take the form of any dangerous substance in the soil, such as oils, chemicals and asbestos. Contamination is likely to be encountered on old petrol stations and industrial sites.

Why?

Depending on the final use for a contaminated site, we may be required to treat or remove contaminated ground. A contaminated site to be used for a school will require a greater level of clean-up or remediation, than one for an industrial unit.

Contaminated ground may affect your health. Dangerous substances could enter the body through the skin, by being ingested or through breathing in fumes or particles.

How?

- If contaminated ground is present on site, you will be informed.

- Ensure you wear personal protective equipment required (e.g. gloves, disposable suits, breathing apparatus.

- Ensure you always move and handle contaminated ground with care.

- Do not store excavated contaminated ground next to watercourses or drains, or mix with clean soils or other wastes.

- Contamination can be identified by visual clues such as colour and appearance, as well as odour.

- When contaminated land is unexpectedly discovered on site:

  - Immediately contact your supervisor.

  - Halt work until the appropriate controls and method for disposing of the contaminated land have been identified.

- Ensure you remove PPE and wash your hands before eating or smoking after working in or adjacent to contaminated ground.

Questions
1. What typical hazardous materials can cause ground contamination?
2. How should you store excavated contaminated ground?
3. What must you do after working in contaminated ground?

If you have any queries regarding the content of this tool box talk please contact your Sustainability Advisor or Line Manager.

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