

Technical Bulletin

ASTM Issues New Standards for Assessment of Vapor Intrusion into Structures on Property Involved in Real Estate Transactions

On March 3, 2008, ASTM International issued its long awaited standard of “Standard Practice for the Assessment of Vapor Intrusion into Structures on Property Involved in Real Estate Transactions”, (ASTM E 2600-08). Vapor Intrusion has emerged as a significant environmental and liability issue for property owners, buyers, sellers, developers, and lenders of commercial real estate assets in recent years. The new standard defines good commercial and customary practices for conducting a Vapor Intrusion Assessment on properties that are the subject of a real estate transaction. ASTM E 2600-08 may be used as a supplement to the standard Phase I Environmental Site Assessment (ASTM E 1527-05) or as a standalone investigation.

Four Tier Process

The new Vapor Intrusion standard requires a four-tier process that considers contaminate impacts to soil or groundwater and a means of entry into structures. The standard is conservative in nature as it presumes that a Vapor Intrusion Condition exists at a property until it can be affirmatively ruled out by an environmental professional.

- **Tier 1**-A site screened if a record search (ASTM E 1527-08) indicates that there are no sources of contamination within certain search distances.
- **Tier 2**-Site not ruled out in Tier 1, analysis of existing or new analytical data for soil and groundwater as compared to risk based concentrations.
- **Tier 3**-Vapor Intrusion not ruled out as a pathway in Tier 2, a Vapor Intrusion Investigation required following relevant regulatory agency guidance or requirements
- **Tier 4**-Identify mitigation options based on risk. Can include institutional controls,

engineering controls (source removal/treatment), and building designs (barriers and/or venting).

Increased Liability Protections

Liabilities faced by parties legally or financially connected to properties with Vapor Intrusion issues extend beyond remedial obligations to a host of statutory and common laws, property diminution of value, claims, and toxic tort exposure lawsuits from on-site personnel.

A pro-active approach to Vapor Intrusion Assessments in a property transaction or in the management of a property will help mitigate and control exposures to liabilities and the material impact to a property’s value. Understanding the potential for Vapor Intrusion at the front end of a new construction project or in the redevelopment of an urban infill site could positively or negatively impact the future of the project.

SCS Engineers has provided focused environmental services for real estate transactions to sellers, purchasers, developers, financial institutions, and others since the 1970s. We have successfully completed thousands of real estate related projects and are well qualified to conduct Vapor Intrusion Assessments.

ASTM E 2600-08 “Overview” We have prepared a brief (~20 minute) presentation that provides greater detail on the benefits and requirements of the new Vapor Intrusion Standard. See below for contact information.

For more information contact:

Jeff Marshall, PE: jmarshall@scsengineers.com
 John Tabella, PG: jtabella@scsengineers.com
 Reston, Virginia
 1.703.471.6150
 1.800.767.4727