
Standard Practice for Drilling for Subsurface Investigations—Unexpectedly Encountering Suspected Hazardous Material

AASHTO Designation: R 21-96 (2023)

Technically Revised: 1996

Reviewed but Not Updated: 2023

Tech Subcommittee: 5c, Quality Assurance and Environmental



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Drilling for Subsurface Investigations— Unexpectedly Encountering Suspected Hazardous Material

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1. SCOPE

- 1.1. This practice is intended to help protect drillers in the event they unexpectedly encounter suspected hazardous materials while performing subsurface investigations. This is accomplished by training the drillers, identifying precautions to minimize risks of contamination, and establishing a procedure to follow if suspected hazardous material is encountered.¹
- 1.2. *This standard may involve hazardous materials, operations, and equipment. This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this procedure to establish appropriate safety and health practices and to determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

2. REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

- 2.1. *AASHTO Standard:*
- R 13, Conducting Geotechnical Subsurface Investigations
- 2.2. *ASTM Standard:*
- D420, Standard Guide for Site Characterization for Engineering Design and Construction Purposes
- 2.3. *Other Document:*
- *Hazardous Materials in Project Development Manual*, Texas Department of Transportation, Austin, TX, September 2018

3. SIGNIFICANCE AND USE

- 3.1. There are three basic types of sites. One type is a known hazardous waste site. These sites contain hazardous waste and have been formally labeled. This includes all Superfund sites and CERCLA (Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, 42 U.S.C. Section 9601–9657) sites. The second type is the nonhazardous site. These sites have no hazardous material at all. The third type, which is the subject of this practice, is one that contains unknown and unanticipated hazardous waste. This practice is intended to help drillers in situations in which they have no advance warning that they will encounter hazardous material.