

Soil handling for service installations: basic steps and responsibilities

City of Victoria rights-of-way

Understand when soil relocation applies

- All soil to be excavated by the City from City of Victoria rights-of-way (RoW) must be characterized before ground disturbance starts to identify the appropriate receiving site for disposal.
- This applies to ground disturbance for service installations completed by City crews, regardless of size.
- This process will be initiated by the City after a permit has been issued or a RoW servicing request has been approved by the City.
- Soil characterization costs will be incorporated into the City's cost estimate when services are installed by the City at cost.
- Estimated costs for soil disposal will assume worst-case-scenario contamination.
- The process outlined in this document came into effect on **April 27, 2026**, and applies to all projects that have been initiated since this date.

Key roles

City of Victoria:

- Retains a Qualified Professional (QP) consultant to conduct soil characterization and associated tasks.
- Gives QP-completed documentation to receiving sites and requests manifests as needed.
- Provides guidance, reviews documentation and oversees compliance.

Qualified Professional (QP):

- Registered with regulated profession under the Professional Governance Act, acting as the expert in soil characterization and contaminated sites.
- Conducts sampling, testing and reporting, completes receiving site forms and confirms whether additional provincial notifications are required.
- Provides technical guidance, documentation and compliance support.

Applicant:

- Completes payment at permit issuance, based on rates as established in the City of Victoria's bylaws.

Step-by-step process

Step	Action	Responsibility
1	Applicant pays invoice after City approval and Permit Issuance (flat-fee and at-cost servicing)	Applicant
2	City engages QP	City
3	QP applies for Borehole Permit (as needed for soil sample collection) and Street Occupancy Permit	QP
4	City issues Borehole Permit or Street Occupancy Permit(s), as needed, or City approves RoW servicing changes as needed	City
5	Soil sampling and laboratory testing	QP
6	Prepare necessary report, receiving site forms and transport manifests	QP
7	Submit report, forms and manifests to receiving site for approval	City
8	Schedule RoW servicing activities (i.e., ground disturbance/excavation)	City

City of Victoria responsibilities

- Guide City staff and QPs on pre-soil disturbance, characterization and relocation requirements.
- Review and accept documentation.
- Coordinate with receiving sites and QP as needed; provide required documents to receiving sites.
- Communicate with applicant and QP.
- Conduct RoW servicing works.

Qualified Professional (QP) responsibilities

- Apply for required permits for sampling (Borehole, Street Occupancy).
- Implement soil sampling plan aligned with project scope.
- Coordinate CALA-accredited lab testing and interpret results.
- Prepare Soil Characterization Report.

- Prepare receiving site forms.
- If applicable, submit required notifications to the Ministry of Environment and Parks.
- If requested, be on site during excavation if soil is separated for different receiving sites.

Applicant responsibilities

- Prior to ground disturbance, ensure all relevant documents and any external approvals are in place for the project.
- Notify the City of **any changes to Site Servicing Plan (SSP) immediately:**
 - A SSP (under the Works and Services Bylaw) shows how a site will connect to and be serviced by municipal infrastructure, such as water, sewer and storm systems. It includes the layout, design and technical specifications required for City review and approval prior to construction.
 - Unapproved SSP changes made before or after soil characterization may trigger additional sampling, testing, reporting, disposal planning and provincial notifications, **potentially resulting in substantial scheduling and cost impacts.**
- Key compliance requirements
 - Complete soil characterization and obtain soil acceptance approval from receiving sites before starting project activities (e.g., utility trench excavation).
 - Dispose of soil only at approved receiving sites under contract with the City.
 - Do not temporary store soil on City property. In select cases, the City may consider exceptions with supporting information, including a QP Erosion and Sediment Control Plan, subject to City acceptance.
 - Do not reuse soil within the City RoW. In select cases, the City may consider exceptions with supporting QP soil management plans and a geotechnical letter of assurance, subject to City acceptance.
 - Comply with all applicable requirements to avoid fines, stop-work or investigation orders, liability for remediation costs or prosecution under the [Environmental Management Act](#).

Tips for success

- Maintain clear communication with the City throughout the project.
- To minimize delays, ensure City approvals and any applicable Permits have been issued and received.

- To support scheduling, provide tentative date(s) when your project will be ready for City service installations. Dates are not guaranteed but help with scheduling and prioritization efforts.
- Notify the City immediately to report any scope or design changes (to the SSP or otherwise):
 - The applicant (or assigned representative) should relay all updates; technical changes may originate from the SSP owner (e.g., professional engineer, architect)
 - All design/SSP changes must be documented and authenticated in accordance with the requirements of the drafter's respective regulatory body.
- A City-based revision after issuance may be required.
 - Delays, added costs and compliance risks may result if changes are not communicated promptly and accepted before implementation.

Questions?

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