# Information sheet for environmental audits and preliminary risk screen assessments (PRSAs)

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## Victoria’s environmental audit system

The Environment Protection Act 2017 (EP Act) creates a system of preliminary risk screen assessments (PRSAs) and environmental audits to protect human health and the environment. These processes are used for planning, approvals, regulation and management of contaminated land or activities. The EP Act enables EPA to appoint environmental auditors to conduct, prepare reports and issue statements for environmental audits and PRSAs.

The purpose of a PRSA is to:

* assess the likelihood of the presence of contaminated land
* determine if an environmental audit is required, and
* if an environmental audit is required, recommend the scope for the environmental audit.

The purpose of an environmental audit is to:

* assess the nature and extent of the risk of harm to human health or the environment from contaminated land, waste, pollution, or any activity
* recommend measures to manage the risk of harm to human health or the environment from contaminated land, waste, pollution, or any activity
* make recommendations to manage any contaminated land, waste, pollution or activity.

EPA administers the environmental audit system and ensures an acceptable quality of environmental auditing is maintained. This is achieved by assessing environmental auditor applications and conducting a quality assurance program. These measures ensure that PRSAs and environmental audits are completed in accordance with the EP Act and guidelines issued by EPA or other government agencies.

## File structures

EPA stores digital statements and reports from PRSAs and environmental audits in three parts:

* Part A, the PRSA or environmental audit statement and report
* Part B, report appendices
* Part C, the PRSA statement and executive summary or environmental audit statement and executive summary.

Report executive summaries, findings and recommendations should be read and relied upon only in the context of the whole document. This includes any appendices, and the PRSA statement or environmental audit statement.

## PDF searchability and printing

EPA publishes PRSA and environmental audit statements, reports and appendices on the EPA website. All statements and reports should be in a Portable Document Format (PDF) and searchable.

## Currency of PRSAs and environmental audits

PRSAs and environmental audits address the conditions encountered and information reviewed at the time of preparation. They cannot anticipate changes that may occur beyond the issue date. It is also not possible, not specifically required, for the PRSA or environmental audit report to present all data that could be of interest to all readers. The inclusion of data and other considerations is informed by the purpose and scope for which the PRSA or audit was originally commissioned.

An environmental auditor may amend or withdraw the PRSA or environmental audit statement and/or reports when:

* Information about the site changes from what was available at the time the PRSA or environmental audit was completed, or
* An administrative error is identified.

Anyone accessing a PRSA or environmental audit statement is advised to check [EPA’s website](https://www.epa.vic.gov.au/for-business/find-a-topic/environmental-audit-system/access-environmental-audit-reports) to check is there has been an amendment or withdrawal.

## General environmental duty and Duty to manage contaminated land

The environment protection laws include a general environmental duty (GED) and a duty to manage contaminated land (DtM). The GED requires a person who is engaging in an activity to minimise the risks of harm to human health or the environment from pollution and waste, so far as reasonably practicable.

The DtM means that a person in management or control of contaminated land must minimise the risks of harm to human health and the environment from contaminated land so far as is reasonably practicable.

The GED and DtM remain applicable even if a PRSA or environmental audit has been completed on a site. The findings of a PRSA or environmental audit may indicate ongoing management of a site is necessary to minimise risks of harm to human health and the environment in line with the GED and DtM. The information in a PRSA and environmental audit form part of the body of knowledge of risks of harm and how to minimise them associated with a site.

*All recommendations made by an environmental auditor are important and a critical part of the audit report or PRSA. Recommendations are provided to protect the environment and users from contamination that may be present at that site.*

*EPA expects a person who owns, leases or is engaging in an activity at the site to read the auditor’s recommendations to determine what actions they need to take to manage the risks from the contamination.*

## Further information

For more information on Victoria’s environmental audit system and the environmental duties, visit EPA’s website or contact EPA’s Environmental Audit Unit.

Web: [www.epa.vic.gov.au](http://www.epa.vic.gov.au)

e-mail: [environmental.audit@epa.vic.gov.au](mailto:environmental.audit@epa.vic.gov.au)