

# Frequently Asked Questions

## Enterprise Reclamation Group

March 2025

- Q1. Can OneStop submissions be edited or withdrawn for Phase 1 or Phase 2/3 environmental site assessments (ESAs), reclamation certificate variance (RCV), or conditional adjustment of reclamation liability (CARL)?**
- A1. **No.** Once submitted to OneStop, these you cannot withdraw, reopen, edit, or return a submission. If the submission has errors, you must submit a new and accurate submission that clearly indicates the previous submission was invalid and the reasons why.
- Operators can request that RCV and CARL submissions be returned by emailing [recremquestions@aer.ca](mailto:recremquestions@aer.ca). The operator (not the consultant) must make the return request.
- Q2. Can landowners sign off or release reclamation requirements on a site, waiving the detailed site assessment (DSA) or portions of it?**
- A2. **No.** Landowners are not authorized to waive components of the 2010 reclamation criteria or the need for a DSA (See section 7.4.7. of [Specified Enactment Direction \(SED\) 002: Application Submission Requirements and Guidance for Reclamation Certificates for Well Sites and Associated Facilities](#)).
- The issuance of a reclamation certificate remains with the land, not the registered landowner, so landowners cannot waive reclamation requirements.
  - A current landowner may release improvements left in place, but agreements do not transfer if land ownership changes before certification.
- Q3. Can components of the reclamation criteria be waived for lands to be developed or rezoned to an alternative end land use?**
- A3. **Yes.** Components of the reclamation criteria can be waived for landscape, soils, or vegetation if there are approved plans to change the end land use and redevelop the land and the following requirements have been met (See section 7.2. of *SED 002*):
- The site needs to meet remediation regulations (Phase 1, 2, and 3 ESAs, environmental site assessment standards, record of rite condition (RoSC), etc.).
  - An RCV submission must include the following:
    - subdivision plans, zoning plans, site sketches

- landowner land use change approval
- county/municipal district land use change approval
- completed a DSA for areas of the criteria that are not waived (i.e., landscape or soils)
- any other site-specific information related to the submission

**Q4. Do pipelines need to be included in a Phase 1 ESA?**

A4. **Yes.** Include all associated facilities for the well, including pipelines, in the Phase 1 ESA submission as they are specified land and must meet all aspects of the reclamation criteria (See section 10 of *SED 002*):

- For public land, include the associated *Public Lands Act* disposition.
- Pipelines are only certified when the full segment is included in an application.
- If pipelines are included in a standalone application without an associated well, they must still be assessed and meet all aspects of the remediation and reclamation criteria.

**Q5. Can a herbicide application date within 365 days of a DSA date be entered in OneStop?**

A5. **No.** If you enter a herbicide application date within 365 days of a DSA date, it will result in a OneStop validation error on your application.

- One full growing season, including an overwintering period, must occur before completing the vegetation portion of the DSA (See section 7.4.3 of *SED 002*).
- You may submit an application if a full growing season occurred before the DSA date; however, you must enter an incorrect herbicide application date and an RCV submission explaining the situation with your application.
  - Select the variance as “other” for both the RCV and application and discuss the site specifics with herbicide application dates, DSA dates, and any other pertinent information, including weed control documentation, for your site.

A growing season, as defined in the [Glossary of Reclamation and Remediation Terms Used in Alberta](#), is a period with soil temperatures over 5 degrees Celsius at a depth of 50 cm.

**Q6. How do we meet the requirements of our public land disposition approval conditions regarding seed mix authorization?**

A6. While requests for seeding approval are often sent to the AER, ultimately, the operator is responsible for ensuring its sites meet the applicable end land-use reclamation criteria.

- The use of natural recovery revegetation is encouraged for reclamation activities.
- If seeding is deemed necessary for reclamation success (e.g., high erosion risk), the operator is responsible for selecting a seed mix that establishes a target native plant community for the ecosite.
- Seed mixes should be free of species in the *Weed Control Act* and any species, including agronomic species, considered undesirable for the ecosite.

**Q7. Can satellite or drone imagery assessments, with accompanying statistical analysis, be used as an assessment for reclamation certification?**

A7. **No.** Satellite or drone imagery assessments as a standalone tool for assessing reclamation for certification is not an accepted method.

- Government policy does not support these methodologies.
- Aerial and satellite imagery assessments can be used as supporting information for an application; however, field assessments must still be conducted (See section 10.0 of the [2010 Reclamation Criteria for Wellsites and Associated Facilities for Cultivated Lands](#)).

**Q8. Can professional justification be used when a landowner restricts off-site access to collect control assessment points?**

A8. **Yes.** Professional judgement can be used when representative controls are unavailable because of restricted access or incompatible adjacent land use (See section 8.3 of the [Reclamation of Specified Land: 2010 Cultivated Reclamation Criteria](#)).

- Every attempt should be made to use adjacent land or representative land.

Where controls are unavailable, an RCV must be submitted with professional justification for using non-representative controls or no control data and should include supporting documentation (landowner contact logs, aerial imagery, soil surveys, etc.).

**Q9. Can sites affected by forest fires, either through burning or firefighting third-party impacts, proceed with reclamation certification?**

A9. **Yes.** When applying for sites and associated facilities where damage occurred from either forest fires or firefighting activities, the following circumstances may apply.

- A passing DSA was completed before the fire damage.
  - Submit the application via the usual process in OneStop.
- No assessment or passing DSA was completed before the fire damage.
  - A waiting period of two years is recommended so on-site and off-site vegetation can be assessed together.
- The firefighting activities have caused damage to the lease and associated facilities.
  - Submit an RCV for third-party impacts for review on a site-by-site basis.

**Q10. After a reclamation certificate is issued, is anything required to ensure the cancellation of certified dispositions?**

A10. **No.** Previously, an “Intent to Cancel” was required through OneStop to ensure the cancellation of dispositions. OneStop has been automated, and if “cancel disposition” is selected in the reclamation application, the dispositions are automatically cancelled.

- Dispositions selected for cancellation should be processed within two months of certification.
- The partial certification process remains unchanged, and cases are reviewed on a site-by-site basis.
- If dispositions are not cancelled after two months, email [recremquestions@aer.ca](mailto:recremquestions@aer.ca) for assistance.

**Q11. Is there going to be an age limit for DSAs for certification purposes?**

A11. **Yes.** The next edition of *SED 002*, to be released in 2025, clarifies age limits for DSAs.

- Submit the reclamation application within three years of the DSA to be valid for certification purposes.
  - This applies to soils, landscape, and vegetation assessments.

**Q12. Is the operator responsible for the final selection of seedlings for tree planting on reclaimed forested sites?**

A12. **Yes.** The operator is responsible for selecting proper seedlings for reclamation on specified land.

- Seedling selection must adhere to expectations set out by the Government of Alberta for seed zones. Planting only native species representative of the ecosite and appropriate to the seed zone is permitted.

- Additional information on tree planting and seed zones can be found on the Forest Management Standards & Guidelines for Alberta.
- Should I consult the forest management agreement (FMA) holder during reclamation planning for tree planting?
  - While consulting the FMA holder may be beneficial for sourcing or selecting seedlings, the operator is responsible for the final reclamation requirements.

**Q13. Do I need to record introduced non-native herbaceous species when completing forested DSAs?**

A13. **Yes.** Introduced non-native species, including agronomic species, must be documented in the appropriate sections of the assessment tool and record of observation (RoO). Introduced non-native species can be classified as compatible species or undesirable species. Compatible species are native and non-native species part of a seed mix that was appropriate to the construction period or as outlined in historical agreements with the land manager (See Section 10.1 of the [2010 Reclamation Criteria for Wellsites and Associated Facilities for Forested Lands](#)). Undesirable species are other introduced native or non-native species that are not considered compatible.

- Compatible species can be recorded in the dominant three herbaceous species in the RoO. To designate species as compatible, complete one of the following two options under the revegetation section of the reclamation application (See section 7.4.1 of *SED 002*).
  - Copies of the species mix approval, seed certificates, and seeding date must be provided for compatible species if known.
  - Provide a list of the species composition found on the site, identifying species as desirable, compatible, and undesirable and the reasoning for species being classified as compatible.
- Undesirable species must be documented in the assessment tool and RoO as a weed using the appropriate rating table within the criteria (FRT.2; Appendix D, [2010 Reclamation Criteria for Wellsites and Associated Facilities for Forested Lands](#)).
  - Rate undesirable species not regulated by the *Weed Control Act* under the problem/volunteer section of the forested RoO.

**\*Disclaimer: This FAQ cannot not be used in place of criteria or procedures outlined in 2010 Reclamation Criteria and *SED 002*.**