

WAC 173-340-550 Payment of remedial action costs. (1) Policy.

RCW 70A.305.050(3) requires that the state seek to recover the amounts spent by the department for investigative and remedial actions and orders. It is the department's intention to recover those costs which are reasonably attributable to individual sites. Timing of cost recovery for individual sites will be considered on a case-by-case basis, however, the department may demand, and generally requires, payment of costs as they are incurred.

(2) **Costs.** Each person who is liable under chapter 70A.305 RCW is liable for remedial action costs incurred by the department. Remedial action costs are costs reasonably attributable to the site and may include costs of direct activities, support costs of direct activities, and interest charges for delayed payments. The department may send its request for payment to all potentially liable persons who are under an order or decree for the remedial action costs at the site. The department shall charge an hourly rate based on direct staff costs plus support costs. It is the department's intention that the resulting hourly rate charged be less than the hourly rate typically charged by a comparably sized consulting firm providing similar services. The department shall use the following formula for computing hourly rates:

Hourly Rate = DSC + DSC(ASCM) + DSC(PSCM), where:

DSC = Direct Staff Costs defined in (a) of this subsection.

ASCM = Agency Support Cost Multiplier defined in (b) of this subsection.

PSCM = Program Support Cost Multiplier defined in (c) of this subsection.

(a) Costs of direct activities are direct staff costs and other direct costs. Direct staff costs (DSC) are the costs of hours worked directly on a contaminated site, including salaries, retirement plan benefits, Social Security benefits, health care benefits, leave and holiday benefits, and other benefits required by law to be paid to, or on behalf of, employees. Other direct costs are costs incurred as a direct result of department staff working on a contaminated site including, for example, costs of: Travel related to the site, printing and publishing of documents about the site, purchase or rental of equipment used for the site, and contracted work for the site.

(b) Agency support costs are the costs of facilities, communications, personnel, fiscal, and other statewide and agency-wide services. The agency support cost multiplier (ASCM) used shall be the agency indirect rate approved by the agency's federal cognizant agency (which, as of July 1, 1993, was the United States Department of the Interior) for each fiscal year.

(c) Program support costs are the costs of administrative time spent by site managers and other staff who work directly on sites and a portion of the cost of management, clerical, policy, computer, financial, and other support provided by other program staff to site managers and other staff who work directly on sites. Other activities of the toxics cleanup program not included in program support costs include, for example, community relations not related to a specific site, policy development, and a portion of the cost of nonsite management, clerical, policy, computer, financial, and other support staff. The program support cost multiplier (PSCM) used shall be calculated by dividing actual program support costs by the direct staff costs of all hours charged to site related work. This multiplier shall be evaluated at least biennially and any changes published in at least two publications of the *Contaminated Site Register*. The calculation and source documents used in any revision shall be audited by either the state

auditor's office or a private accounting firm. Audit results shall be available for public review. This multiplier shall not exceed 1.0 (one).

(3) **Request for payment.** When the department requests payment of remedial action costs it shall provide an itemized statement documenting the costs incurred.

(4) **Interest charges.** A charge of 12 percent interest (annual percentage rate, compounded monthly) shall accrue on all remedial action costs not paid within 90 days of the billing date, or within another longer time period designated by the department.

(5) **Natural resource damages.** Nothing in this section shall affect the authority of the department and the office of attorney general to recover natural resource damages.

(6) **Independent remedial actions.**

(a) The department may collect, from persons requesting a site-specific technical consultation under WAC 173-340-515, the costs incurred by the department in providing such advice and assistance.

(b) For situations where the department has decided to collect its costs, a refundable deposit of a reasonable amount will be required. The department's hourly costs shall be determined based on the method in subsection (2) of this section.

(c) The department's Toxics Cleanup Program manager or designee may make a discretionary, nonappealable decision on whether a person is eligible for a waiver of fees based on that person's ability to pay.

(d) The department shall waive collection of its costs, where appropriate, in providing technical assistance in support of an appropriate level of public participation or where the department's time in responding to the request is de minimis.

(7) **Prepayment of costs.**

(a) Persons potentially liable under this chapter or seeking a prospective purchaser agreement may request the department's oversight of remedial actions through a prepayment agreement. The purpose of such an agreement is to enable department oversight of remedial actions at lower priority sites. The department shall make a determination that such an agreement is in the public interest. A prepayment agreement requires a person to pay the department's remedial action costs, in advance, allowing the department to increase staff for the unanticipated workload. Agreements may cover one or more facilities. Whether the department can respond favorably to a request for a prepayment agreement will depend, in part, on the department and attorney general receiving authorization for the staffing necessary to implement the agreement. Persons interested in such an agreement are encouraged to contact the department early on to informally discuss the potential for using such an agreement at a facility.

(b) Prepayment agreements do not replace an order or decree but are preliminary to or work in conjunction with such documents. Persons entering into a prepayment agreement shall enter into good faith negotiations on an agreed order or consent decree governing remedial actions at the facility in accordance with the procedures described in WAC 173-340-520(1) or 173-340-530(2). Failure to successfully conclude such negotiations may result in the department withdrawing from the prepayment agreement or initiating enforcement action.

[Statutory Authority: Chapters 70A.305 and 70A.355 RCW. WSR 23-17-159 (Order 18-09), § 173-340-550, filed 8/23/23, effective 1/1/24. Statutory Authority: Chapter 70.105D RCW. WSR 01-05-024 (Order 97-09A), §

173-340-550, filed 2/12/01, effective 8/15/01. Statutory Authority: RCW 70.105D.030 (1)(f), 70.105D.040(2) and SB 5404. WSR 93-24-064, § 173-340-550, filed 11/24/93, effective 12/25/93. Statutory Authority: Chapter 70.105D RCW. WSR 90-08-086, § 173-340-550, filed 4/3/90, effective 5/4/90.]