

VIRGIN EXCAVATED NATURAL MATERIAL (VENM)

This information sheet provides clarification of the definition of virgin excavated natural material (VENM) and advice on its use, placement and disposal in the ACT.

Definition of VENM¹:

VENM is defined as virgin excavated natural material (eg clay, gravel, sand, soil and rock) **that is not mixed** with any other waste and that:

- (a) has been excavated from areas that are not contaminated², as a result of industrial, commercial, mining or agricultural activities, with manufactured chemicals, that does not contain sulphidic ores or soils and does not contain naturally elevated levels of certain contaminants, or
- (b) consists of excavated natural materials that meet such criteria as may be approved by the EPA³.

Where excavated material has been reused or processed in any way, has been stockpiled or is sourced from a site where contamination is present or has been previously identified **it is not classified as VENM**.

Fill material, top soil or material which has been impacted by anthropogenic inclusions (for example asphalt, road base and building rubble) or vegetation waste is also **not classified as VENM**.

Classification and Disposal of VENM:

Material meeting the definition of VENM is pre-classified as 'inert waste'¹ and can be disposed to landfill in the ACT without the Environment Protection Authority's (EPA) approval. VENM can also be accepted at appropriately licensed construction and demolition waste recyclers in the ACT without the EPA's approval. Contact the EPA for a list of these facilities on 13 22 81 or at environmentalstandards@act.gov.au.

Placement of VENM

An Environmental Authorisation is required under the *Environment Protection Act 1997* where more than 100m³ of VENM is to be placed on any of the following land uses as defined in the ACT Territory Plan⁴ or the National Capital Plan⁵:

- Broadacre
- Rural
- Hills
- Ridges and Buffer Areas
- River Corridors
- Mountains and Bushlands
- Plantation Forestry

Approval from other ACT authorities may also be required for placement of soil on any land use including those detailed above. For example planning approval from the ACT Planning and Land Authority under the *Planning and Development Act 2007*. Contact the ACT Planning and Land Authority for further information on 6207 1923.

Further Assessment

All material not meeting the above definition of VENM is subject to assessment in accordance with Environment Protection Authority [Information Sheet 4 - Requirements for the Reuse and Disposal of Contaminated Soil in the ACT](#) prior to its removal from site for disposal or reuse purposes in the ACT.

¹ As defined in the EPA [Environmental Standards: Assessment and Classification of Liquid and Non-liquids Wastes](#)

² An environmental assessment is required to confirm that potentially contaminating activities have not been undertaken at commercial/industrial land use sites otherwise material from these sites would not be considered as VENM (see Appendix A of the EPA [Contaminated Sites Environment Protection Policy](#) for a list of potentially contaminating activities).

³ The EPA currently has no criteria for the reclassification of excavated or other material as VENM. All material not meeting the above definition of VENM would be subject to assessment in accordance with Environment Protection *Information Sheet 4 - Requirements for the Reuse and Disposal of Contaminated Soil in the ACT*

⁴ [Territory Plan](#).

⁵ [National Capital Plan](#)

Note: *This advice only relates to VENM classification procedures in the ACT.*

Where the material is proposed for reuse or placement in NSW the material must be classified in accordance with NSW EPA Waste Classification Guidance. Approval from the appropriate NSW regulatory authorities must be sought and granted prior to the movement of the material from the ACT to NSW.

For more information

Contact the Environment Protection Authority
by calling Access Canberra on 13 22 81
Go to www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au

Last updated January 2019

Further Information | Phone: Access Canberra on 13 22 81 | Email: environmental.standards@act.gov.au | Web: www.act.gov.au/accesscbr

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