

Cover Sheet
Standard Operating Procedure

Operation Title: Documentation of Field Activities and Development of a Trip Report

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1.0 Applicability

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) applies to all programs in the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's (MEDEP) Division of Remediation (DR). It may be utilized by other Divisions within MEDEP, as determined by the respective Division Directors or their designees.

This SOP is not a rule and is not intended to have the force of law, nor does it create or affect any legal rights of any individual, all of which are determined by applicable statutes and law. This SOP does not supersede statutes or rules.

2.0 Purpose

The purpose of this document is to describe the MEDEP/DR procedure for documenting field actions, including site visits or collection of environmental samples.

3.0 Key Definitions

Field Notebook: Bound books in which information from field activities are documented. Such books may contain information from multiple sites or be dedicated to a particular site. Such books may have water resistant pages (in which case they should not be used when sampling for PFAS due to cross contamination concerns).

Field Notes: Information gathered during a field activity which are not part of a bound field notebook.

Field Data Sheet: A special use form for obtaining field notes in a standardized format, such as for low flow groundwater well monitoring, landfill inspection form, etc.

4.0 Responsibilities

All MEDEP/DR Staff must follow this procedure when performing this task. All Managers and Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that their staff are familiar with and adhere to this SOP. MEDEP/DR staff reviewing data by outside parties should ensure that this SOP (or an equivalent) was followed, depending on the specific Data Quality Objectives (DQOs) of the task.

Other MEDEP SOPs may also apply when performing this task, including, but not

limited to MEDEP/DR SOP *RWM-DR-014 - Development of a Sampling and Analysis Plan* (SAP). The SAP should consider quality assurance and quality control (QA/QC) samples and measures, the specifics of which will depend on the DQOs for the task. Types of QA/QC samples are discussed in more detail in the DR Quality Assurance Plan (QAP). SAP development includes provisions for creating a Health and Safety Plan (HASP) associated with the activity, including compliance with [Dig Safe](#) notifications when disturbing soil with powered equipment or tools (i.e., not hand tools). Dig Safe notification does not include public utility clearance requests which must be completed separately (e.g., sewer and water lines). These utility marking requests typically do not extend onto marking private property (i.e., they may only mark lines in the public right of way), so hiring a private utility marking company may be necessary, depending on site specifics. Fieldwork and data collection tasks must be properly documented in accordance with applicable MEDEP SOPs and policies.

5.0 Guidelines and Procedures

5.1 Introduction

There are several reasons for taking field notes when conducting work at hazardous substance, petroleum, and landfill sites. These include:

- To provide a record of conditions of a site at a specific time, such as a site inspection, initial site walk, routine site visit
- To document specific activities at a site such as ongoing remedial actions
- To document information in the field, such as recording low flow monitoring well sampling field parameters
- To allow the re-creation of an event by persons not at the site (for comparing data of different events or finding sample locations for long-term monitoring)
- To provide a means of reviewing the activities at a site if quality concerns with data collected during the site visit are encountered during data review

All field notes should be taken with these purposes in mind. Additionally, all field notes should be included in associated reports by either scanning

relevant bound field notebook pages or other field notes and providing to the project manager for the site, or transcribing the information in field notes into a trip report.

5.2 Bound Field Notebook

Upon receipt of a bound field notebook, enter your name, DEP address, and phone number on the inside front cover. Staff may dedicate field notebooks to a specific site if it is a long-term project or use one general field book for all of their tasks. Field notebooks should be given a specific designation (site name and book volume number for site specific field books e.g. Joe's Garage Site, Volume 1), or project manager/year/book number for general field books, (e.g. Joe Smith, 2008 – 1). If a field notebook is not paginated, staff must number all pages, in order, prior to its use.

5.3 Site Documentation

All field notes should be added to a standard bound field notebook issued by MEDEP/DR or by utilizing other field forms.

Upon arrival at a site, the following information must be written down in the field notes: 1) date of field activity; 2) site or project name, location, and EGAD or spill number; 3) names of persons visiting site, including who they represent and their positions or roles; 4) time of arrival; 5) weather conditions.

After completing the header, record field observations as necessary. At the bottom of each page, and at the end of each day or event, sign and date the field notebook.

The field notebook must be kept organized, legible, and accurate as it may be used as evidence in court proceedings. Do not doodle on pages or document personal comments. Additionally, only blue or black ink should be used. A Rite in the Rain type pen should be used on water resistant field notebook pages. Pencils should not be used to write in any type of field notebook or field log forms.

5.4 Items to be Documented

Given the variety of circumstances that can be found, it is difficult to provide a minimum for documentation. Staff should take field notes with the concept that another person will be able to understand or re-create the activities from the notes taken.

The following list should be considered a guide for documentation:

- Names of personnel present and organization
- The sample event date and time
- Weather conditions
- Site specific information, such as project name, town, identifiers (EGAD or spill number).
- Purpose of site visit
- Field measurements (such as PID readings, pH, temperature, etc.)
- Sample station location designations, sample container numbers, etc.
- Specific sample location information, such as description of location, address, sample point names, depths of sample(s), tide conditions, soil conditions, water color/conditions, etc.
- Equipment information, such as unique meter numbers or other identifiers to allow follow-up of equipment calibration or repair if data quality concerns arise
- Out of the ordinary events, such as equipment failure, damage to monitoring wells or evidence of tampering, observations of gross contamination, odors, etc.
- Information the field staff believe may be useful or pertinent at a later date

5.5 Error Corrections

Place one line through error, date and initial it, and continue with correct information. Never scratch out or blacken over error such that it is completely obscured, only write a single line through it. Never rip out or otherwise remove a page from a bound field notebook.

5.6 Field Data Sheets, Logs, and Forms

Some field activities have specific forms for taking notes, or specific projects may require specialized forms to assist in data organization, so consult relevant programmatic guidance prior to undertaking field work.

5.7 Electronic Inspection Forms

Some MEDEP/DR programs may have developed electronic field forms where information can be entered electronically in the field and can then produce a report which is downloaded and added to the administrative record for the site.

5.8 Field Event Trip Report (FETR)

After each field event, a field event trip report (FETR) package must be completed for the event. If the field event has multiple MEDEP/DR staff present, the person responsible for completing the FETR will be stated in the SAP. Typically, the FETR will minimally consist of the completed FETR form (Attachment A to this SOP). Where applicable, photocopies of field notes taken or field forms completed by all personnel during the event, labeled photographs, and copies of chains of custody for any samples should be attached. The finished product should be a single complete .pdf document that includes all attachments.

In cases where laboratory data is produced, those results may be summarized in the FETR and copies of lab reports attached. Alternatively, data summaries and lab results may be summarized under separate cover. It is also recommended that a summary memo to the file be developed and attached to the FETR form which outlines the field events purpose, activities, and outcomes, and other relevant issues.

Ultimately, the amount of detail and number of attachments will vary from site to site or visit to visit, depending on objectives and level of information being collected. **It is critical that site activities are adequately and clearly documented and that complete reports with all attachments are added to the administrative record for the site,** in accordance with MEDEP/DR record retention policies and procedures.

6.0 References

None

Maine DEP SOP No. RWM-DR-013

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ATTACHMENT A

Field Event Trip Report

DIVISION OF REMEDIATION FIELD TRIP REPORT

DATE: _____ **Weather Conditions:** _____

SITE NAME and LOCATION: _____

MEDEP PERSONNEL PRESENT: _____
OTHER PEOPLE PRESENT: _____

PURPOSE OF SITE/AREA VISIT:

- ☐ Reconnaissance
- ☐ Residential Water Sampling
- ☐ Sampling Monitoring Wells or Micro Wells
- ☐ Waste Sampling, Drums, Stained Soil, Other
- ☐ Soil Sampling
- ☐ Surface Water/ Sediment Sampling. Water Body:
- ☐ Geoprobng
- ☐ Contractor Oversight
- ☐ OTHER:

FIELD NOTES and SAMPLE NUMBERS RECORDED BY: _____

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS: _____

ATTACHMENTS:

- ☐ Copy of Field Book Pages
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ OTHER:

Signature _____