

567—105.102(455B,455E) Definitions. In addition to the definitions in Iowa Code sections 455B.381, 455B.411, and 455E.2, the following definitions shall apply to this division:

“Action level” means, for any contaminant:

1. The MCL if one exists;
2. The HAL if one exists and there is no MCL; or
3. The action level established by the department based on current technical literature and recommended guidelines of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and recognized experts, if there is no MCL or HAL.

“AFS” means the Special Publication 30, “Investigation and Monetary Values of Fish and Freshwater Mussel Kills,” published by the American Fisheries Society.

“Aggravated risk” means a contamination situation that presents a potentially catastrophic or an immediate and substantial risk of harm to human life or health or to the environment. Examples include exposure of humans, animals or the food chain to acutely toxic substances, contamination of a drinking water supply, threat of fire or explosion, or similar situations.

“Air or air resources” means those naturally occurring constituents of the atmosphere, including those gases essential for human, plant, and animal life.

“Background” means groundwater quality unaffected by human activities, and generally shall be determined by historical data of the geological services bureau or other government agencies for the type of aquifer or location involved in a given case. If available data is not adequate, background may be established by groundwater samples upgradient of a source or potential source of a substance that is detected in or has a reasonable probability of entering the groundwater.

“Best available technology” means those processes that most effectively remove, treat, or isolate contaminants from groundwater or associated environment, as determined through professional judgment considering actual equipment or techniques currently in use, published technical articles and research results, engineering reference materials, consultation with known experts in the field, and guidelines or rules of other regulatory agencies.

“Best management practices” means maintenance procedures, schedules of activities, prohibition of practices, and other management practices, or a combination thereof, that after problem assessment and evaluation of alternatives is determined to be the most effective means of preventing or abating contamination at a location.

“Biological resources” means fish, wildlife and other biota belonging to, managed by, held in trust by, appertaining to, or otherwise controlled by the state of Iowa, the United States, or local government. Fish and wildlife include freshwater aquatic and terrestrial species; game, nongame, and commercial species; and threatened and endangered species. Other biota encompass shellfish, terrestrial and aquatic plants, and other living organisms not otherwise listed in this definition.

“Code of Federal Regulations” or *“CFR”* means the federal administrative rules adopted by the United States as amended through August 1, 2025.

“Contaminant” means any chemical, ion, radionuclide, synthetic organic compound, microorganism, waste or other substance that does not occur naturally in groundwater or that occurs naturally at a lower concentration, and includes but is not limited to all hazardous substances as defined in 42 U.S.C. 9601 (2018), and any element, compound, mixture, solution or substance designated pursuant to 40 CFR 302.4.

“Damages” means the costs of restoration, rehabilitation, and replacement of resources, or acquisition of equivalent resources, as determined in accordance with this chapter; the reasonable and necessary costs of the assessment, to include the cost of performing the assessment and administrative costs and expenses necessary for, and incidental to, the assessment; lost services to the public; and, in the event the damages claim is not resolved within six months after the incident leading to the damages, interest at the current rate published in the Iowa Administrative Bulletin by the department of revenue pursuant to Iowa Code section 421.7. The interest amount shall be computed from the date the amount of the claim is confirmed by a final ruling of the commission in a contested case decision.

“Drinking water supply” means any raw or finished water source that is or may be used by a public water system, as defined in Iowa Code section 455B.171, or as drinking water by one or more individuals.

“Geologic resources” means those elements of Earth’s crust such as soils, sediments, rocks, and minerals, including petroleum and natural gas, that are not included in the definitions of groundwater and surface water resources.

“Groundwater resources” means water in a saturated zone or stratum beneath the surface of land or water and the rocks or sediments through which groundwater moves. It includes groundwater resources that meet the definition of drinking water supplies.

“HAL” means a lifetime health advisory level for a contaminant, established by the EPA. Health advisories represent the concentration of a single contaminant, based on current toxicological information, in drinking water that is not expected to cause adverse health effects over lifetime exposure.

“MCL” means the enforceable maximum contaminant level established by the EPA pursuant to the Safe Drinking Water Act.

“Natural resources” or *“resources”* means land, fish, wildlife, biota, air, water, groundwater, drinking water supplies, and other such resources belonging to, managed by, held in trust by, appertaining to, or otherwise controlled by the United States, the state of Iowa, or local government. These natural resources have been categorized into the following five groups: surface water resources, groundwater resources, air resources, geologic resources, and biological resources.

“Point source” means any building, structure, installation, equipment, pipe or pipeline (including any pipe into a sewer or publicly owned treatment works), well, pit, pond, lagoon, impoundment, ditch, landfill, storage container, motor vehicle, rolling stock, or aircraft, or any site or area where a contaminant has been deposited, stored, disposed of, or placed, or otherwise come to be located.

“Preventative” or *“prevention”* refers, in the context of these rules, to actions or efforts to minimize or stop further contamination in a situation where contamination already exists or is imminent.

“Remedial action plan” means a written report that includes all relevant information, findings, and conclusions from a site assessment, including all analytical results and identification of contaminant migration pathways; identification and evaluation of cleanup alternatives, including both active and passive measures using best available technology and best management practices; a recommended cleanup action or combination of action, including identification of expected cleanup levels consistent with the cleanup goal of 105.104(3)“b”; a monitoring network and schedule to document cleanup levels; and a proposed schedule of implementation.

“Responsible person” means any person who is legally liable for the contamination in question or who is legally responsible for abating contamination under any applicable law, including Iowa Code chapters 455B and 455E, and the common law. This may include the person causing, allowing or otherwise participating in the activities or events that cause the contamination, persons who have failed to conduct their activities so as to prevent the release of contaminants into groundwater, property owners who are obligated to abate a condition, or persons responsible for or successor to such persons.

“Significant risk” means:

1. The presence in groundwater of a contaminant in excess of an action level;
2. The presence of a contaminant in the soils, surface water, or other environment in proximity to groundwater that may reasonably be expected to contaminate the groundwater to an action level; or
3. The presence of a contaminant or contaminants in the groundwater, or in the soils, surface water or other environment in proximity of groundwater that may be expected to contaminate groundwater in quantities, concentrations, or combinations that may have a significant adverse impact on public health, safety, environment, or quality of life. This criterion would normally be applied where there is no established action level or where combinations of more than one contaminant are present.

“Site assessment plan” means a written proposal for study of a contamination situation to determine the types, amounts, and sources of contaminants present, hydrogeological characteristics of the site, and the vertical and horizontal extent of contamination, with a goal of developing an adequate remedial action plan. The proposal must include: recommendations for collection of relevant historical data such as site management practices, inventory records, literature searches, photographs and personal interviews; a methodology for obtaining groundwater flow information including well placements, construction and elevation, bore logs, static groundwater table measurements, groundwater elevations, groundwater gradients (isopleth), and information on soil transmissivity, porosity and permeability; and a methodology

for identifying contaminant plumes, including additional monitoring wells to identify the horizontal and vertical extent of contamination, a site plot showing the estimated configuration of contamination, and a sampling schedule and list of constituents to be analyzed. The plan development may require preliminary field investigations.

“Surface water resources” means the waters of the state, including the sediments suspended in water or lying on the bank, bed, or shoreline. This term does not include groundwater or water or sediments in ponds, lakes, or reservoirs designed for waste treatment under applicable laws regulating waste treatment.

[ARC 0486D, IAB 8/19/26, effective 9/23/26]