

GUIDE



Guide To Choosing an Environmental Partner

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Property developers need reliable environmental partners for the successful and profitable completion of construction and renovation projects. Managing the health and safety of workers, the public, and the environment in a compliant, effective, and cost-effective way requires both expertise and diligent processes.

Property owners, developers, and construction project managers need environmental partners who understand construction and have deep expertise in the environmental issues they face. The right partner leaves you confident that environmental issues will be managed safely, thoroughly, and on time, to keep projects on track.

Discovery of an environmental issue demands a quick and strategic response and finding the right partner is key to minimizing the risk of damage, delays, and compounding environmental threats.

HOW DO YOU KNOW YOU NEED AN ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNER?

Property developers should consult an environmental partner for new construction, demolition, renovation, and historical renovation projects to ensure that potential environmental threats are identified early in the process.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS



For new construction projects, renovations, demolitions, and more, lenders or investors may require an initial environmental assessment, known as a Phase I Environmental Site Assessment, as part of a financing agreement.

In California, **school districts are required to have a Phase I assessment prepared** for proposed “new or expanding” school properties that will be financed with state bonds.

A Phase I assessment can also be done as part of ordinary due diligence to ensure that issues are surfaced before construction begins.

This assessment, which typically includes a historic record search, regulatory research, geology and hydrogeology review, interviews, and site reconnaissance, is designed to identify and evaluate any recognized environmental conditions (RECs) for a specific property. If this assessment finds evidence of environmental hazards, further assessments and remediation may be necessary.

A Phase I assessment can identify the likelihood of problems like contaminated soil or hazardous chemicals stored on the property in underground and/or aboveground storage tanks. A known or suspected chemical release on the site will require further assessment and remediation that may include the removal of contaminated soil or hazardous substances.

You may also need a **Phase 2** or **Phase 3** assessment depending on what is found in Phase 1.

If hazardous materials need to be removed, an environmental partner will mitigate the risk of collateral damage with processes that prevent the spread of airborne dust or run-off that can impact groundwater, in addition to ensuring that mitigation is managed in compliance with local, state, and federal regulations.

A reliable environmental partner will also provide a prompt response to any unforeseen issues that occur throughout the project.

Discovery of an environmental issue demands a quick and strategic response and finding the right partner is key.

WATER INTRUSION, MOLD & MILDEW



Water leaks or intrusion can impact new construction projects due to rain events, faulty sprinkler systems, misuse of water or improper installation of building materials and will require careful environmental management to ensure that moisture impacted construction materials are quickly dried or removed if there is evidence of mold or mildew. Having a [moisture management plan](#) helps to ensure the effectiveness of this process to eliminate the health risks and cost overruns associated with mold and mildew.

Once building material becomes damp or wet, mold can begin to grow on construction building materials such as drywall in as little as 24 to 48 hours, according to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ASSESSMENTS



The first step of environmental due diligence often involves a [hazardous building materials assessment and survey](#) for asbestos, lead, universal waste, and other harmful substances. For demolition and renovation projects, this may follow a [Phase 1 Environmental Assessment](#) that identifies the likelihood of hazardous materials on the site.

An experienced environmental partner will ensure that nothing is missed. These assessments are conducted in compliance with the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM), the EPA, and local regulatory agencies like California's Department of Toxic Substances Control, Air Quality Management Districts or Air Pollution Control Districts.

Every project has the potential to become mired in environmental compliance hurdles. A comprehensive pre-renovation or pre-demolition hazardous building materials survey lets you move forward with confidence and with a cost-effective plan for managing any required remediation in accordance with regulatory standards.

In California, where environmental regulations are abundant, there can be an advantage to working with a company experienced in working with California regulatory agencies.

HISTORIC RENOVATION ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT



The renovation of historic properties involves an added layer of oversight to ensure that historical preservation requirements are met. Historic renovation can also pose additional environmental challenges.

Historic buildings from the 1930s through 1980s are likely to be constructed with building materials containing toxic substances such as asbestos. If handled incorrectly, demolition of hazardous building materials can cause contaminants such as lead, asbestos, and PCBs to become airborne or released into the environment. Well-trained and properly certified specialists are needed to ensure safe and compliant processes for mitigating these types of hazards.

Additional engineering support may also be required to ensure that historic features are protected throughout any environmental mitigation processes. A full-service environmental engineering firm will provide a mitigation plan that takes engineering requirements into consideration.

Look for an environmental services partner with deep expertise and certification in a wide array of hazards as well as experience in managing environmental projects in the type of setting where you will be working. From historic buildings to health care facilities, college campuses, military bases or other government renovation projects, different processes and requirements often come into play in these specialized settings.

On the next page is a checklist of criteria for determining if an environmental services partner can meet your needs.



ENVIRONMENTAL PARTNER CHECKLIST



Experience:

- Is the company experienced in the safe and timely mitigation of workplace and worksite hazards on similar projects?
- Has the team worked on public projects such as military sites and hospitals where vetting is particularly thorough and demanding?
- Does the business have substantial experience dealing with regulatory agencies to prevent the escalation of risks, costs, and compliance hurdles?

Expertise:

- What are the education levels of company employees?
- Are the workers trained and certified?
- Does the business have the appropriate expertise on staff? (toxicologists, Certified Industrial Hygienists)
- Can the organization give you a list of references where similar work was performed successfully?

Reliability:

- Does the partner have adequate insurance coverage?
- Can the employees meet deadlines?
- Does the organization respond quickly?
- Can you reach the company 24/7 in emergency situations?
- Does the company have experience working with construction managers to ensure cost-effective and timely solutions?

ABOUT OMEGA ENVIRONMENTAL

Omega Environmental's **team of industry veterans** can assess your projects for environmental liabilities and provide oversight for remediation, renovation, or removal of toxic substances. We offer 24/7 support and have a reputation for helping construction projects prevent—and solve—environmental challenges before they become budget, safety, and deadline-wrecking obstacles.

Our team of experts includes engineers, certified industrial hygienists and PhD-level toxicologists. We have a wide array of experience including assessing and remediating hazardous substances for **universities**, military facilities and other government buildings, office and **commercial development** projects, hotels, and **historic renovations**, among other projects.

We work hard to go above and beyond, and our staff is also experienced in helping to manage the public information processes critical to environmental work on college campuses, military bases and other government and private properties where public safety must be addressed throughout the project.

Our assessments are EPA, OSHA, and ASTM compliant. We carry \$5 million of insurance coverage and provide turnkey service for assessment, remediation, demolition, and site safety. Partnering with Omega is an investment in the success of your development project.

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