

## **What is a Site Investigation?**

The objective of a site investigation is to gather the information needed to carry out the risk assessment, in order to be in a position to assess the presence and significance of contamination of land.

Samples of soil can be taken at various depths using a number of pieces of equipment – ranging from simple hand tools to rig mounted drilling systems.

In addition to sampling of soils, the investigation may include the sampling of water and gases that may be present in the ground.

The information gathered enables the risk assessment to be carried out to conclusions in which an acceptable degree of confidence can be placed.

At any stage of an investigation, the overall objectives will be to characterise the contaminants present and to identify pathways and receptors for the purposes of the risk assessment.

The information required to carry out the risk assessment to a robust conclusion should be identified before designing or planning an investigation. The objectives of a site investigation will vary, depending upon the stage in the process that has been reached, and the underlying intentions for the land involved.

Objectives may be to:

- define or clarify what is already thought to be occurring on site
- support a risk assessment
- provide data for the design of remedial (clean up) works
- benchmark the contamination status of a site

For more information and documents detailing current UK best practice on Site Investigation Techniques, please see the CIRIA (Construction Industry Research and Information Association) Contaminated land Web Portal and Environment Agency Web sites.