

SHORT AND LONG-TERM LEAKAGE THROUGH COMPOSITE LINERS

7th Arthur Casagrande Lecture¹

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ABSTRACT

The factors that may affect short-term leakage through composite liners are examined. It is shown that the leakage through composite liners is only a very small fraction of that expected for either a geomembrane (GM) or clay liner (CL) alone. However, the calculated leakage through holes in a GM in direct contact with a clay liner is typically substantially smaller than that actually observed in the field. It is shown that calculated leakage taking account of typical connected wrinkle lengths observed in the field explains the observed field leakage through composite liners. Provided that care is taken to avoid excessive connected wrinkle lengths, the leakage through composite liners is very small compared to a typical GM or CL alone. It is shown that the leakage through composite liners with a geosynthetic clay liner (GCL) is typically much less than for composite liners with a compacted clay liner (CCL). Finally, factors that will affect long-term leakage through composite liners are discussed. It is concluded that composite liners have performed extremely well in field applications for a couple of decades and that recent research both helps understand why they have worked so well, but also provides new insight into issues that need to be considered to ensure excellent long-term liner performance of composite liners—especially for applications where the liner temperature can exceed about 35°C.

RÉSUMÉ

Les facteurs qui peuvent influencer à court terme les fuites à travers les étanchéités composites sont examinés. On démontre que les fuites à travers ce type d'étanchéité sont moindres que celles anticipées pour une géomembrane (GM) ou une couche d'argile (CA) seule. Toutefois, les fuites calculées pour les défauts dans une GM mise en contact direct avec une CA sont typiquement beaucoup plus petites que celles observées sur le terrain. On montre que la contribution des fuites calculée en tenant compte de la longueur typique de plis raccordés entre eux explique l'ampleur des fuites observées sur le terrain pour de telles étanchéités composites (GM et CA). Lorsque l'on réduit la présence de longueurs excessives de plis raccordés, les fuites à travers les étanchéités composites peuvent s'avérer très faibles lorsque comparées à celles des GM ou CA utilisées seules. Il est aussi démontré que les fuites à travers les étanchéités composites comportant un géosynthétique bentonique (GSB) sont typiquement bien moindres que pour les étanchéités composites avec une couche d'argile compactée (CAC). Finalement, on discute des facteurs qui affectent les fuites à long terme à travers les étanchéités composites. Les travaux montrent que ces

étanchéités composites se sont très bien comportés sur le terrain depuis deux décennies, et que les recherches récentes aident à comprendre les raisons qui expliquent ces bonnes performances. Les études fournissent aussi une nouvelle perception des aspects qui doivent être considérés pour assurer une excellente performance à long terme des étanchéités composites, particulièrement dans le cas où la température peut excéder 35°C.

KEYWORDS: Leakage, composite liner, geosynthetic clay liner, geomembrane, landfill, municipal solid waste, lagoons

1. INTRODUCTION

Composite liners are comprised of a geomembrane (GM) over a clay liner. Typically the clay liner (CL) will be either a compacted clay liner (CCL) or a geosynthetic clay liner (GCL). The composite liner may rest on either a permeable (e.g., drainage) layer or a subsoil which may act as an attenuation layer (AL). GMs used in landfill related applications are usually high density polyethylene (HDPE) with a thickness typically ranging from 1.5 mm to 2.5 mm. GCLs (typically < 10 mm thick off the roll) come in a variety of forms but invariably involve a thin layer of bentonite clay which may be glued to a plastic carrier layer or contained between two geotextiles or in some cases between two geotextiles with a plastic coating/film on one side. The most common GCLs have a geotextile on either side of the bentonite layer and are held together by needle-punching or, in some cases, stitching. These are sometimes called reinforced GCLs because of the presence of the needle-punched or stitched fibres, which place some constraint on the swelling of the GCL as it hydrates in addition to contributing to the internal shear strength of the GCL (both positive attributes). Needle-punched GCLs with bentonite between two geotextiles are the most commonly used GCLs and consequently the discussion of leakage through GCLs in this paper is focused on this type of GCL. Unless otherwise noted, the bentonite in the GCLs is natural sodium bentonite. This bentonite is commonly used in North American GCLs but not necessarily elsewhere. Cost pressures (lowest bid) may affect the quality of bentonite in GCLs unless strict quality requirements are imposed in the GCL specification; especially when good quality natural sodium bentonite is not locally available because of both material and transportation costs. The AL is a subgrade (usually already in place) that has a hydraulic conductivity, $k_A \leq 1 \times 10^{-7}$ m/s to be classified as an attenuation layer.

A composite liner is intended to minimize the migration of fluids (both liquids and gases) by the processes of diffusion and advection. There are a wide range of applications for composite liners but this paper focuses on their use as bottom liners for municipal solid waste (MSW) landfills and leachate lagoons, although much of the material presented and discussed has a broader range of application.

To some extent, a composite liner takes advantage of the strengths of one material to offset the weaknesses of the other. For example, an intact GM is an excellent barrier to the advective and diffusive migration of fluids such as landfill leachate and many contaminants in the leachate (e.g., volatile fatty acids, sodium, chloride, ammonia, sulphate, iron, lead, zinc, mercury, arsenic, etc. see

Rowe et al. 2004; Rowe 2005)—except where it has a hole. Even one relatively small hole per hectare (0.5 mm radius) can result in significant leakage for a GM if there is no hydraulic resistance adjacent to the GM. CCLs and GCLs under ideal conditions can also perform as excellent advective barriers to leachate but may not be as effective as a diffusion barrier as the GM to the contaminants listed above. In contrast, certain contaminants found in small quantities in leachate (e.g., volatile organic compounds such as benzene, toluene, dichloromethane, etc.) can readily diffuse through standard HDPE GMs, while a suitable clay liner and attenuation layer can provide much better resistance to their migration (Rowe 2005). Thus the combined use of a GM together with a GCL or CCL and an attenuation layer has the potential to provide excellent diffusive resistance to a wide range of chemicals found in landfill leachate by taking advantage of the better performance of the GM in preventing diffusion of some contaminants and the better performance of the clay liner and attenuation layer in minimizing the migration of other contaminants.

However, the combination of the GM and CL does more than take advantage of the benefits of the two materials—together they act as a composite liner which, as will be shown, demonstrates superior performance than one would expect simply based on the sum of the parts.

The objective of this paper is to explore the factors that can affect the performance of GMs and CLs (with emphasis on GCLs) as part of composite liners for containing MSW leachate both in landfills and leachate lagoons. The paper follows three of the author's past papers that have addressed some of these issues, namely the keynote lecture at the 6th International Conference on Geosynthetics in Atlanta (Rowe 1998), the 45th Rankine lecture (Rowe 2005) and the 23rd Rocha Lecture (Rowe 2007). This paper will touch on some of the same issues as these three papers—but with an emphasis on highlighting what has been learned with respect to selected topics in the intervening years and addressing the issue of leakage (advective flow) in much more detail than the earlier papers. Thus this paper only deals with a few of the many issues addressed in the previous papers and, except where essential for understanding, does not repeat material in those three papers. The interested reader will find much information in those papers that is very relevant today and which complements the material presented in this paper. The reader should be aware that each practical project is different and so while the information presented in this paper will provide a guide to issues that should be considered, specific numbers that are presented should not be used for projects without independent verification of their suitability for that particular project or application.

2 HOLES IN GEOMEMBRANES

In the absence of holes, the leakage of water or leachate through a typical 1.5 mm HDPE GM used in landfill applications is negligible. However, experience has shown that it is extremely difficult to ensure no holes exist in practical situations. Holes may arise from: (a) manufacturing defects; (b) handling of the GM rolls; (c) on-site placement and seaming; (d) the placement of drainage gravel over the liner system; (e) trafficking over the liner or the overlying protection layer; (f) placement of the waste in a landfill or cleaning of residue from a leachate lagoon; and (f) stress cracking as the GM ages. Table 1 summarizes the hole sizes reported by Colucci and Lavagnolo (1995). Here 50% of holes had an area of less than 100 mm^2 (equivalent radius $r_o < 5.64 \text{ mm}$). Nosko and Touze-Foltz (2000) reported 3 holes/ha following installation and 12 holes/ha following placement of the drainage layer. In principle, holes arising from sources (a) through (d) having a radius greater than 0.5 mm should be detected by a water-lance electrical leak detection survey on bare geomembrane since this is a calibration requirement of ASTM D7002 (ASTM 2010a). The suggested calibration for up to 600 mm of soil covering a geomembrane, a di-pole survey ASTM D7007 (ASTM 2009b) is typically calibrated to a 6 mm diameter hole although other calibrations can be specified and sensitivity can be increased with tighter measurement spacing and wetter conditions. However, these surveys are not generally required and even then holes can be missed and subsequent holes can develop. Giroud and Bonaparte (2001) suggested that 2.5 to 5 holes/ha be used for design calculations of leakage for GMs installed with strict construction quality assurance.

The holes discussed above represent those present shortly after construction and placing of the waste (or filling of a lagoon with leachate). As will be discussed later, the number of holes may increase in the long-term due to ageing of the GM.

3 LEAKAGE THROUGH A GEOMEMBRANE

In the absence of hydraulic resistance above and below a GM, and assuming zero head below the GM as may be the case for a single primary GM liner in a double liner system such as shown in Figure 1, the leakage through a circular hole in a GM is given by Bernoulli's equation:

$$Q = \pi C_B r_o^2 \sqrt{2gh_w} \quad [1]$$

where Q = leakage through the hole (m^3/s), C_B = coefficient (-) related to the shape of the edges of the hole with $C_B = 0.6$ for sharp edges (Giroud and Bonaparte 1989a), r_o = radius of the hole (m), g = acceleration due to gravity (m/s^2) and h_w = head on the GM (m).

Adopting a typical design head on the liner for landfill applications of $h_w = 0.3$ m and considering a leachate head of $h_w = 5$ m in a lagoon, the leakage through a GM liner, as calculated from Eq. 1, for three different hole sizes are given in Table 2. For a landfill with 2.5 to 5 holes/ha having a radius of 0.5 mm the leakage may range from 250 to 500 lphd (litres per hectare per day). For 2.5 to 5 holes/ha with a radius of 1 mm (area of 3.14 mm^2) the leakage is about 1,000 to 2,000 lphd and well within the range of values observed for operating landfills with a leak detection system (LDS). For 2.5 to 5 holes/ha with a radius of 5.6 mm (area of $100 \text{ mm}^2 = 1 \text{ cm}^2$) the leakage is very large (32,000 to 63,000 lphd). Even for the smallest hole, the leakage is too large when dealing with containment of contaminated fluids such as leachate. Once the leakage exceeds 1,000 lphd it is certainly excessive for landfill applications. As may be inferred from Eq. 1, and can be seen from Table 2, increasing the head to what one might expect in a pond just increases the leakage further for each hole size.

4 LEAKAGE THROUGH CLAY LINERS

In the absence of a GM, the leakage through a clay liner is given by Darcy's law:

$$Q = A k_L i \quad [2]$$

where Q = leakage through the liner (m^3/s), A = area of liner under consideration (m^2), k_L = hydraulic conductivity (permeability) of the clay liner (m/s) and i = hydraulic gradient (-).

4.1 Factors affecting hydraulic conductivity of GCLs

The short-term hydraulic conductivity, k_L , of a GCL will depend (Rowe *et al.* 2004) on:

- the type (e.g., sodium or calcium) and quality of the bentonite and, to some extent, the mass per unit area of bentonite;
- the method of manufacture of the GCL (e.g., whether it is reinforced or glued, the type of geotextiles used to confine the bentonite, whether it is stitch-bonded or needle-punched, if it is thermally treated, or if it has a plastic film bonded to it, etc.); and
- the effective stress.

For GCLs with sodium bentonite, manufacturers' specification sheets typically define a maximum k_L of 5×10^{-11} m/s or 3×10^{-11} m/s under standard test conditions (e.g., D5887 (ASTM 2009) or D5084 (ASTM 2010b)) that commonly involve a consolidation pressure of 35 kPa, a pressure difference across the specimen of 15 kPa and a permeant that is de-aired, deionized water (ASTM D5887), although de-aired tap water is also used by some manufacturers when using ASTM D5084.

In the short-term the value of k_L of the GCL in the field will be different from that stated by the manufacturers' specification sheets if there is (Rowe 1998):

- different consolidated stress conditions than in the reference laboratory test (k_L may be a little higher under low stress conditions such as in a lagoon application or smaller for the high stresses experienced in a typical landfill application);
- bentonite migration down-slope in either a "dry" or hydrated state; or
- lateral movement (thinning) of bentonite during and following hydration that would cause an uneven distribution of the bentonite in the GCL—for example, due to trafficking on a partially hydrated GCL before it is covered or wrinkles in a GM may create an area of reduced bentonite in an underlying GCL (Stark 1998); or

In addition to the factors noted above, the long-term k_L value for a GCL in the field may be different from that in the manufacturer's literature if there is:

- interaction between the leachate permeating the GCL and the bentonite in the GCL (e.g., Rad *et al.* 1994; Petrov *et al.* 1997; Petrov and Rowe 1997; Ruhl and Daniel 1997; Rowe 1998; Shackelford *et al.* 2000; Schroeder *et al.* 2001, Jo *et al.* 2001, 2004, 2005; Kolstad *et al.* 2004; Rowe 2007; Katsumi *et al.* 2007; Rauen and Benson 2008; Guyonnet *et al.* 2005, 2009; Musso and Pejon 2010);
- loss or internal erosion of bentonite into underlying subsoil or drainage layers (Rowe and Orsini 2003)—an additional geotextile filter may be required to avoid bentonite loss for some GCLs (Estornell and Daniel 1992); or
- cation exchange with carbonate in the bentonite as is found, for example, in some sodium activated calcium bentonites (e.g., Egloffstein *et al.* 2002; Guyonnet *et al.* 2009) or divalent cations in the adjacent soil/pore water (e.g., James *et al.* 1997), especially if combined with wet-dry cycles (e.g., Melchior 1997; Lin and Benson 2000; Meer and Benson 2007; Benson *et al.* 2010; Scalia and Benson 2011).

Rowe (1998) tabulated data from a number of papers for 8 different GCLs containing natural sodium bentonite. The hydraulic conductivity with respect to water ranged from 5×10^{-11} m/s at “low” (3 to 4 kPa) confining stress to 1×10^{-11} m/s at “intermediate” (34 to 38 kPa) confining stress and 7×10^{-12} m/s at “high” (109 to 117 kPa) confining stress.

When GCLs are permeated with salt solutions or simulated or real MSW leachates, the confining stress at the time of hydration and the hydrating fluid can have a significant effect on the final hydraulic conductivity as shown in a number of the papers cited above. For example, Petrov and Rowe (1997) showed that a GCL hydrated with de-aired, deionized water at 3 to 4 kPa and then permeated with a 0.1 M NaCl solution ($\text{Na}^+ \sim 2300$ mg/L) at the same low stress level had a hydraulic conductivity of 1×10^{-10} m/s whereas the same GCL hydrated at the same stress but permeated with a 0.1 M NaCl solution at higher stress (112 kPa) had a hydraulic conductivity of 1.5×10^{-11} m/s (about one order of magnitude lower), and a sample hydrated with water and then permeated with 0.1 M NaCl all at 108 kPa had a hydraulic conductivity of 0.7×10^{-11} m/s. Thus it is important to carefully consider the hydrating conditions and final stress level when selecting the hydraulic conductivity of the GCL to be used for calculating leakage on a given project. It also follows that for a given GCL, the hydraulic conductivity relevant to a liner on the bottom of a landfill may be lower than for the same GCL being used in a leachate holding or treatment pond.

The chemical composition of the permeating fluid can have a very significant effect on the hydraulic conductivity of a GCL as has been demonstrated by many of the papers cited above. A great deal has been published on the interaction of GCLs with simple salt solutions (predominantly NaCl, CaCl_2 and to a lesser extent KCl); relatively little work has been done on simulated MSW leachates. Rowe (1998) summarized what had been done by 1998. Most of the comparable data was at about 30 to 35 kPa, at which stress Ruhl and Daniel (1997) reported $k_L < 1 \times 10^{-12}$ m/s for a real MSW leachate (see Rowe 1998 for a discussion of this low value) but a very high $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s for a very aggressive “synthetic leachate”. This synthetic leachate was not based on any real landfill leachate but rather was prepared with high cation concentrations that would greatly increase the value of k_L for the sodium bentonite being tested. At the same stress, Petrov and Rowe (1997) reported $k_L = 7 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s for a synthetic leachate based on the composition of the Keele Valley landfill leachate at that time. Shan & Lai (2002) reported tests at 35 kPa for a GCL hydrated and permeated with a simulated MSW leachate which gave $k_L = 2.6 \times 10^{-11}$ and $k_L = 3.0 \times 10^{-11}$ for two different GCLs. Lange *et al.* (2010) reported tests at 25 kPa for a GCL hydrated with water and

permeated with a simulated MSW leachate which gave $k_L = 4 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s. Other papers addressing this issue have been published by Schroeder et al. (2001), Katsumi et al. (2007), Rauen and Benson (2008) and Guyonnet et al. (2005, 2009), Rosin-Paumier et al. (2011).

Rauen and Benson (2008) examined GCLs permeated with both real conventional and real recirculated leachate for a year at 70 kPa. They reported $k_L \leq 1 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s for conventional leachate and $k_L \leq 0.7 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s for recirculated leachate. Guyonnet et al. (2009) examined a number of GCLs with bentonite from different continents (North America, Europe, India and Australia). In each case the GCL was prehydrated with a 10^{-3} M NaCl solution and then permeated with synthetic or real landfill leachate at confining stresses of 25, 50 and 100 kPa. When permeated with synthetic leachate, values of $k_L \leq 4.5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s were reported for 100 kPa for 5 of 6 GCLs with natural and activated sodium bentonite examined but $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s was reported for one case. When permeated with real leachate the values of k_L were lower than that for synthetic leachate with $k_L \leq 4.4 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s at 100 kPa or all natural or activated sodium bentonite. They reported that in once case a GCL which the manufacturer claimed contained natural bentonite actually contained activated bentonite. In another case the so-called bentonite had a smectite content of less than 30 % by weight and the most abundant clay mineral was kaolinite. This GCL had a cation exchange capacity of 38 meq/100g. These two examples highlight the need for vigilance in checking the bentonite delivered to a site. This is especially important in a competitive global economy where lowest bid sometimes results in the delivery of a material different to that expected but, unless one has appropriate construction quality control and assurance (CQC/CQA), one may not know until it is too late. Guyonnet et al. (2009) recommended minimum performance-based indicators for selecting GCLs for use in landfill applications. These indicators included requiring a minimum swell index ($SI \geq 24$ mL/2g) and cation exchange capacity ($CEC \geq 75$ meq/100g), and a maximum calcite content ($\leq 5\%$ by weight).

Based on a review of the available data, the “typical” or “base case” value of k_L for consideration in this paper was taken to be the typically specified $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s since it represents a reasonable value for GCLs permeated with water at low (3 to 4 kPa) stress levels but also closely approximates the values obtained for GCLs permeated with a realistic simulated MSW leachate at stresses of 25 to 35 kPa (e.g., Petrov and Rowe 1997; Shan & Lai 2002; Lange *et al.* 2010 as noted above) and is conservative with respect to tests using real leachate noted above. It is recognised that, especially at low confining stress, permeation with leachate having high cation

concentrations (or cation exchange with cations in an adjacent soil) could result in higher hydraulic conductivities and a value of $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s was selected as a second base case. To assess the effect of k_L on leakage, additional calculations were performed for $k_L = 7 \times 10^{-12}$ m/s as a lower bound, $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s as an intermediate, and $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s as an upper bound based on the very aggressive synthetic leachate used by Ruhl and Daniel (1997).

Given the importance of the hydration of a GCL prior to contact with leachate on its long-term hydraulic performance, it is surprising that the hydration of GCLs from the underlying subsoil has received very little attention and it is simply assumed that they will be adequately hydrated by the time they need to perform their containment function. Daniel *et al.* (1993) showed that, when placed on sand at 3% gravimetric moisture content, an initially air dry GCL reached 88% moisture content after 40 to 45 days. Eberle and von Maubeuge (1998) showed that an initially air dry GCL placed over sand with a moisture content of 8 to 10% reached a moisture content of 100% in less than 24 hours and 140% after 60 days. However, Rayhani *et al.* (2011) showed much slower hydration for three different needle-punched GCLs on underlying sand and silty sand of up to 70 weeks. They demonstrated that the initial moisture content of the subsoil can have a large effect on the rate of hydration and the final equilibrium GCL moisture content. For example, GCLs on subsoil with initial moisture contents close to field capacity hydrated quickly and their final moisture contents were essentially the same as if the GCL had been immersed in water. In contrast, GCLs on the subsoil at initial moisture content close to their residual moisture content (5% for the silty sand and 2% for the sand considered) only hydrated to a gravimetric moisture content of 30 to 35%, which is about a quarter of the fully hydrated value.

Rayhani *et al.* (2011) also demonstrated that the method of GCL manufacture had a significant effect on both the rate of GCL hydration and the final GCL moisture content when the subsoil had low moisture contents. This difference was related to different water retention curves for the three GCLs (Beddoe *et al.* 2011), the difference in confinement of the bentonite provided by different carrier geotextiles and the presence or absence of thermal treatment of the needle-punched fibres. The best hydration performance was observed for GCLs manufactured with a scrim-reinforced and thermally treated nonwoven carrier geotextile. One of the GCLs had coarse granules ($D_{60} = 1.1$ mm) and two had fine granules ($D_{60} = 0.35$ mm). There was no apparent significant difference in hydration performance related to the granule size. The effect of having powdered versus granular bentonite was not examined in this study.

4.2 Factors affecting hydraulic conductivity of CCLs

Much has been written on compacted clay liners (see Rowe *et al.* 2004 for a review). The short-term hydraulic conductivity, k_L , of a CCL will depend (Rowe *et al.* 2004) on:

- the plasticity and grain size distribution of the soil;
- the moisture content at which it is compacted;
- the method of compaction; and
- the effective stress.

In the long-term, the value of k_L will depend on:

- interaction between the leachate permeating the CCL and the clay minerals; and
- desiccation.

Desiccation results from drying of the clay from its as-compacted state and may be especially severe for CCLs compacted near or above the plastic limit. Desiccation may occur (a) after construction of the clay liner and before placing the GM (Figure 2, 3); (b) after placing the GM and before covering with the drainage layer; and/or (c) after placing the waste.

These issues have been discussed by Rowe *et al.* (2004) and Rowe (2005) and are elaborated further later in this paper. Based on experience (e.g., Benson *et al.* 1994, 1999; Daniel and Koerner 1995; Rowe *et al.* 2004), CCLs typically have a design $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s. Well-constructed liners may achieve $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s or even $k_L \leq 1 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s after consolidation (Rowe 2005); however, CCL may also have $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s unless great care is taken in the selection of the soil and compaction. These values will be used to calculate leakage in some of the following sections.

4.3 Calculated leakage through clay liners

Table 3 gives the calculated leakage for a primary clay liner in a double liner system where the primary liner is underlain by a leak detection layer to collect the leakage through the primary liner (Figure 4). Leakages are given for a typical CCL design $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s and thickness $H_L = 0.6$ m and a typical GCL $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s and $H_L = 0.01$ m, assuming zero head below the liner ($h_a = 0$ m) and no attenuation layer ($H_A = 0$ m). Under these circumstances, the leakage through the GCL and CCL are very similar—both about 1300 lphd. This is within the range expected for a GM alone having 2.5 to 5 holes ($r_o = 1$ mm) per hectare (Table 2).

If the GCL was resting on a 0.59 m thick attenuation layer (AL, $k_A = 1 \times 10^{-7}$ m/s; Figure 5) such that the total thickness and average gradient was the same as for the CCL (Table 3), then for

the landfill liner application ($h_w = 0.3$ m), the leakage with the GCL is almost three times that for the CCL for the assumed hydraulic conductivities—this will be discussed later.

Considering a single clay liner resting on a subsoil (AL; Figure 5) of thickness H_A , such that the total distance between the top of the liner and the underlying receptor aquifer is $H_L + H_A = 3.75$ m (the minimum allowed under Ontario Regulation 232/98 (Ontario Ministry of the Environment 1998)) and assuming that the potentiometric surface is 3 m above the aquifer ($h_a = 3$ m), the leakage can also be calculated based on Darcy’s law:

$$Q = A k_s i_s \quad [3a]$$

where

$$k_s = (H_L + H_A)/(k_L/H_L + k_A/H_A) \quad [3b]$$

is the harmonic mean hydraulic conductivity of the clay liner and attenuation layer (m/s), and

$$i_s = (h_w + H_L + H_A - h_a)/(H_L + H_A) \quad [3c]$$

is the average hydraulic gradient (-) across the CL and AL. The leakage for the GCL and CCL for this case is given in the last two rows of Table 3. Again, for these parameters, the leakage through the single GCL is greater than for the CCL.

In a lagoon application ($h_w = 5$ m; Table 3) the leakages are higher due to the higher gradients but the trends are the same as discussed above except for the GCL alone which now gives much greater leakage (due to the much higher gradient) than the CCL alone.

A key parameter in assessing the performance of a single clay liner is the hydraulic conductivity. The hydraulic conductivity of a GCL or a CCL can vary depending on many factors as discussed earlier. The leakages calculated using typical upper bounds for bottom liner applications discussed in this paper ($k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s for the GCL and $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s for the CCL—under extreme conditions higher values are possible) are given in Table 4. For the “typical” worst case conditions (Table 4) the GCL performs about the same as the CCL except for the case of a primary liner in a double lined system (rows 1 and 2 of Table 4), where the GCL performs substantially better than the CCL for the landfill liner case.

Just as the hydraulic conductivity can be worse than typical design parameters it can also be better (especially in landfill bottom liners when there is significant applied stress; see Rowe *et al.* 2004). The leakages calculated for the cases discussed above but using typical lower bounds of hydraulic conductivity ($k_L = 7 \times 10^{-12}$ m/s for a GCL and $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s for a CCL) are given in

Table 5. As might be expected, the leakages are substantially reduced compared to the typical design parameters (Table 3).

The examples discussed above serve to illustrate two points. First, when a clay liner is used as a single liner it is very important to consider the factors that can affect hydraulic conductivity and adopt a design value relevant to the expected conditions at the site, as they may be quite different to “typical” values obtained by permeating a GCL or CCL with water in the laboratory (Rowe *et al.* 2004). For example, hydraulic conductivity values can be significantly affected by both the permeant and stress (Petrov and Rowe 1997). Thus the hydraulic conductivity in a bottom liner application with 50 m of overlying waste may be quite different to that in a leachate lagoon application. Second, in many of the cases considered above, the leakage exceeds what would normally be considered acceptable in terms of potential impact on an underlying aquifer.

5 LEAKAGE THROUGH COMPOSITE LINERS

Except perhaps for the very best conditions, the leakages reported in the two previous sections for both a single GM and single CL generally exceed desirable values. A common means of reducing the leakage is to use the GM and CL together to form a composite liner as illustrated schematically in Figures 6 and 7. The schematics show the GM in direct contact with the underlying CL and Figure 8 shows a photo of this situation at the Queen’s University Environmental Liner Test Site (QUELTS) located in Godfrey, Ontario. Leakage through a hole in a composite liner for this direct contact situation will be discussed in the following subsection.

5.1 Solutions for GM in direct contact with clay liner

Rowe (2005) reviewed the many methods (empirical, analytical and numerical) for calculating leakage through a GM with a hole in direct contact with the clay liner. Probably the most commonly used of these methods are empirical equations (e.g., Giroud and Bonaparte 1989b; Giroud 1997) established by curve-fitting families of solutions from analytical equations for the situation shown schematically in Figure 9. These solutions assume that there is a zone between the GM and CL with transmissivity, θ .

The transmissive zone between the GM and CL arises due to small irregularities at the interface (as discussed below) between the two materials that will allow fluid to migrate a distance called the wetted radius from the hole and then move by advection through the underlying liner. Thus the

leakage, Q , will depend on: (a) the size of the hole; (b) the head difference across the liner; (c) the hydraulic conductivity of the clay liner; and (d) the transmissivity of the interface between the GM and CL. The very important new parameter here is the transmissivity of the interface.

5.2 Interface transmissivity

The irregularities at the interface between a GM and CCL may arise from many sources including small stones or clay clods on the surface, indentations made by tires or the edge of a smooth drum roller, cracks (e.g., due to desiccation) of the surface of the clay, etc. Cartaud *et al.* (2005) reported that the interface between 2 mm thick HDPE GM and a CCL could vary from direct contact to as much as a 10 mm gap within a 1 m² area. Giroud and Bonaparte (1989b) defined two types of GM/CCL contacts: “good” and “poor” and Rowe (1998) related these descriptors to transmissivities of the GM/CCL interface:

(1) for good contact

$$\log_{10} \theta = 0.07 + 1.036(\log_{10} k_L) + 0.0180(\log_{10} k_L)^2 \quad [4]$$

(2) for poor contact

$$\log_{10} \theta = 1.15 + 1.092(\log_{10} k_L) + 0.0207(\log_{10} k_L)^2 \quad [5]$$

where transmissivity, θ , has units m²/s and CCL hydraulic conductivity k_L has units m/s. For a typical CCL design hydraulic conductivity $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s, this corresponds to a transmissivity of 1.6×10^{-8} m²/s for good contact and 1×10^{-7} m²/s for poor contact. These values are used in the calculations described later. These relationships consider only minor local irregularities and do not consider major desiccation of CCLs (Figures 2 and 3) or significant wrinkles in the GM to be discussed later.

The results for GM/GCL interface transmissivity reported by Harpur *et al.* (1993) at 7 kPa (a stress relevant to some lagoon applications) and 70 kPa are given in Table 6 together with values for a stress at 50 kPa reported by Barroso *et al.* (2008, 2010) and Mendes *et al.* (2010).

The method of manufacture of the GCL had some influence on the results with the lowest transmissivity values being for a GCL with bentonite glued to a plastic carrier layer such that the bentonite was in direct contact with the GM.

Harpur *et al.* (1993) only examined one GCL with a nonwoven geotextile (N) in contact with the GM and obtained relatively high values of transmissivity (1×10^{-10} m²/s at 7 kPa and 8×10^{-11} m²/s at 70 kPa); however, many other tests indicated in Table 6 for GCLs with a similar construction

gave much lower values with an average of $2.2 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ based on five tests on four different GCLs at 50 kPa.

Harpur *et al.* (1993) examined three GCLs with a woven geotextile (W) in contact with the GM and obtained relatively wide ranging values of transmissivities (3×10^{-11} to $2 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ at 7 kPa and 6×10^{-12} to $1 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ at 70 kPa). However, four other tests summarised in Table 6 for a woven geotextile in contact with the GM gave quite consistent values with an average of $2.5 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$.

Barroso *et al.* (2008) examined the effect of the GM surface on transmissivity, examining one smooth and three different textured GMs in contact with the same GCL (N-F; Table 6) and the range of transmissivities was relatively small (1.4×10^{-11} to $3.7 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ at 50 kPa) with an average of $2.3 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$.

Barroso *et al.* (2010) studied the effect of confining stress on interface transmissivity between a smooth GM and a GCL with a nonwoven cover geotextile in contact with the GM. Based on five tests at stresses between 25 kPa and 200 kPa they found very little difference with the highest value of $\theta = 1.4 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ at 25 kPa and values between 7.8×10^{-12} and $1.2 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ between 50 and 200 kPa.

Mendes *et al.* (2010) examined the effect of bentonite on interface transmissivity. Two different calcium bentonite GCLs having hydraulic conductivities of $5.8 \times 10^{-8} \text{ m/s}$ (mass per unit area, $M_A = 5730 \text{ g/m}^2$) and $6.9 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m/s}$ ($M_A = 10590 \text{ g/m}^2$) at 50 kPa had remarkably similar transmissivities ($\theta = 3.0 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ and $2.8 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$). The two other sodium bentonite GCLs, having hydraulic conductivities of $3.2 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m/s}$ ($M_A = 5410 \text{ g/m}^2$) and $1.6 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m/s}$ ($M_A = 7400 \text{ g/m}^2$), had an average transmissivity of $2.3 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$. For these GCLs, a 3600-fold difference in hydraulic conductivity of the GCL only increased the leakage by 15% and a 2.5-fold increase in hole size only increased the leakage by 17%.

Based on the foregoing, it appears that the reported GM/GCL interface transmissivity for reinforced GCLs (needle-punched and stitch-bonded) may vary between a high of $2 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ and a low of $6 \times 10^{-12} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ with an average of about $4 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ for all the reinforced GCL data and about $2 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ for all the sodium bentonite data at 50 kPa. Although higher stress may give slightly lower transmissivity, there was no strong trend. Likewise, the geotextile in contact with the GM and the hydraulic conductivity of the GCL had very little effect on the interface transmissivity. Finally, the recent experimental data suggest that the interface transmissivity rather than the

hydraulic conductivity of the GCL controls the leakage through a composite liner with a hole in a GM in direct contact with a GCL, confirming predictions made by Rowe (1998).

5.3 Calculated leakage through a hole in a GM in direct contact with clay liner

Once an estimate can be made of the interface transmissivity, the leakage through a hole in a GM liner in direct contact with an underlying clay liner forming a primary composite liner in a double lined system can be calculated and compared with the leakages calculated earlier for a GM or CL alone using the analytical solution developed by Rowe (1998). The calculated leakages are given in Tables 7 and 8 and discussed below.

Considering firstly a composite liner with a GCL over a 0.6 m thick AL for a 5.6 mm radius hole ($a = 100 \text{ mm}^2$) in the GM, Table 7 summarizes the calculated leakage for a range of values of k , θ and h_w for 2.5 and 5 holes/ha. For a typical “upper bound” GCL hydraulic conductivity of $2 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m/s}$ as examined in Table 4, the leakage for the extreme range of transmissivities reported in the literature ($6 \times 10^{-12} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ and $2 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$; Table 6) the leakage for a typical design head on a landfill liner ($h_w = 0.3 \text{ m}$) ranged between a low of 0.003 lphd and a high of 0.08 lphd (Table 7) as compared to 14,000 lphd for a GCL with $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m/s}$ on a 0.59m AL (Table 4) and 32,000 to 63,000 lphd for the GM alone (Table 2). Similarly, considering a pond application ($h_w = 5 \text{ m}$), the leakage ranged between a low of 0.03 lphd and a high of 0.9 lphd as compared to 87,000 lphd for a GCL with $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m/s}$ on a 0.59m AL (Table 4) and 130,000 to 260,000 lphd for the GM alone.

Compared with the most optimistic value of $k_L = 7 \times 10^{-12} \text{ m/s}$ for the GCL but poor interface transmissivity ($1 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$) for the composite liner, the calculated leakage (for 5 holes/ha) of 0.02 lphd for $h_w = 0.3 \text{ m}$ and 0.3 lphd for $h_w = 5 \text{ m}$ are very small compared to about 190 lphd and 3,000 lphd for a GCL alone with $k_L = 7 \times 10^{-12} \text{ m/s}$ (Table 5). This demonstrates the potentially vast reduction in leakage that can be obtained with a composite liner involving a GCL compared with either a GCL or GM alone in the base liner of a landfill or leachate lagoon.

The results in Table 7 also show that for a given value of $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m/s}$, a 30-fold increase in θ (6×10^{-12} to $2 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$) increased leakage by a factor of about 14 while for a given value of $\theta = 1 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$, an almost 3000-fold increase in k_L only increased leakage by a factor of about 5. Thus for a composite liner where the GM is in direct contact with the GCL, it is the interface

transmissivity rather than the hydraulic conductivity of the GCL that controls leakage for typical values of transmissivity.

Considering, secondly, a composite liner with a CCL and a hole in the GM, Table 8 summarizes the calculated leakage for a typical design $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s, good contact conditions and h_w of 0.3 m and 5 m for both 2.5 and 5 holes/ha. For a landfill bottom liner with $h_w = 0.3$ m the leakage for a CCL alone (Table 3) was 1,300 lphd and for a GM alone with 5 holes/ha was 2,000 lphd and 63,000 lphd for a small ($r_o = 1$ mm) and large ($r_o = 5.64$ mm) hole respectively (Table 2). In comparison, for a composite liner with a similar CCL, the calculated leakage was only 2 and 2.6 lphd for a small and large hole respectively (Table 8).

For a leachate lagoon liner with $h_w = 5$ m, the leakage for a CCL alone (Table 3) was 8,000 lphd and for a GM alone with 5 holes/ha was 8,000 lphd and 260,000 lphd for a small and large hole respectively (Table 2). In comparison, for a composite liner with a similar CCL, the calculated leakage was only 26 and 36 lphd for a small and large hole respectively (Table 8).

Thus, as was found with a GCL, it is also evident that with a CCL the performance of a composite liner is substantially better than a CCL or GM liner used alone.

5.4 Comparison between leakage observed and calculated through composite liners where the GM is in direct contact with clay liner

The calculations for a composite liner with a GM in direct contact with a CL presented in the previous section suggest that composite liners are remarkably good—but the question remains as to how well do these calculations compare with reality? Considering primary composite liners in a double lined landfill system (Figure 6) where there is a leak detection system, the leakage can be calculated for different conditions and compared with what has actually been observed in well-documented landfills. Table 9 presents one such comparison; Rowe (2005) presents others.

For a composite liner with a 0.9 m thick CCL, calculations are presented for 5 holes/ha ($r_o = 5.64$ mm) for excellent conditions ($k_L = 1 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s and good contact with $\theta = 1.6 \times 10^{-8}$ m²/s) and marginal conditions ($k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s and poor contact with $\theta = 1 \times 10^{-7}$ m²/s), together with the range of observed average monthly flows and the peak flow for a number of similar liners (Table 9). Even the worst case calculation is well below the lowest average monthly flow for the actual landfills considered and an order of magnitude below the peak flow.

For a composite liner with a GCL, the calculated leakage for good conditions ($k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s; $\theta = 2 \times 10^{-12}$ m²/s) and poor conditions ($k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s; $\theta = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m²/s) are consistent with the low end of the range but two to four orders of magnitude below the upper end of the range and three to four orders of magnitude below the peak flows (Table 9).

The results presented here further illustrate the point made by Rowe (2005) that calculations of leakage for composite liners assuming direct contact between the GM and the CL significantly (i.e., by one or more orders of magnitude) underestimate the actual leakage in typical North American landfills. Rowe (2005) postulated that the reason for the discrepancy was that GMs in North American landfills are not generally in direct contact with the CL (i.e., at the time covered they do NOT look like the GM in Figure 8) but rather that there are wrinkles which, if coincident with a hole, would substantially increase leakage. Rowe (2005) showed theoretically that the Rowe (1998) equation for leakage through wrinkles could explain the observed leakage, but at that time there was very little data available to confirm the length of connected wrinkles that were required to explain the observed leakage; as indicated below, that data is now available.

5.5 Wrinkles in HDPE geomembranes

Although it has long been recognised that HDPE GMs experience significant thermal expansion and consequent wrinkling (waves) upon heating (e.g., Giroud and Peggs 1990; Giroud and Morel 1992; Pelte *et al.* 1994; Giroud 1995; Koerner *et al.* 1999; Touze-Foltz *et al.* 2001), there was a paucity of data regarding actual wrinkle dimensions on a scale larger than 40 m x 40 m that could be used to quantify leakage for realistic wrinkle geometries.

Rowe (1998) had developed a simple equation to predict leakage through a hole in a GM coincident with (or adjacent to) a wrinkle (Figure 10) which, in its simplest form (assuming no interaction between adjacent wrinkles), can be written:

$$Q = 2 L [k b + (k D \theta)^{0.5}] h_d / D \quad [6]$$

where Q is the leakage (m³/s), L is the length of the connected wrinkle (m); $2b$ is the width of the wrinkle (m); k is either the hydraulic conductivity (m/s) of the clay liner, k_L , if there is no AL or the harmonic mean of the CL and AL hydraulic conductivities, k_s , if there is an AL; θ is the transmissivity of the GM/CL interface (m²/s); $h_d = (h_w + H_L + H_A - h_a)$ is the head loss across the composite liner (m); and $D = H_L + H_A$ is the thickness of the CL and AL (m). All of these parameters except the connected wrinkle length and wrinkle width are as previously discussed.

What is needed to use Eq. 6 is an indication of the likely values of L and $2b$. Thus, starting in 2006 an extensive study was initiated, including the construction of a full scale test liner to provide field data regarding L and $2b$ for some North American conditions.

The Queen's University Environmental Liner Test Site (QUELTS) was constructed at latitude of 44.34°N and longitude 76.39°W, 40 km north-northwest of Kingston, Ontario, Canada in September 2006 to study the long term performance of exposed geosynthetic composite liners (Brachman *et al.* 2007). The relevant portion of the test site was 80 m wide (west to east) with a 21 m long south-facing 3H:1V slope and 19.4 m long base with a 3% grade. A 1.5 mm thick HDPE GM was placed with smooth GM on the base and mostly textured GM on the side slope (full details are given by Brachman *et al.* 2007). Four different GCLs were used to allow an examination of potential shrinkage of different products under similar conditions. This site provided a unique opportunity to examine a number of issues including wrinkling of GMs and shrinkage of GCLs over different times of the day, different seasons and over a number of years.

Figure 8 shows the base liner at QUELTS early on a cool October morning when there are no wrinkles—here the GM is in direct contact with the underlying GCL. If the GM was covered with the protection layer and drainage gravel in this state then there would be no wrinkles and the equations for a composite liner with direct contact would be appropriate. This situation approximates that required in Germany (e.g., Aversch and Schicketanz 1998; Müller 2007) but not generally practised elsewhere. In fact, it does not take much exposure to the sun before significant wrinkles start to form. For example, Figure 11 shows the same base liner at QUELTS as shown in Figure 8 on a sunny spring morning in March when the ambient temperature is 9°C. Despite the presence of some snow still on the liner, wrinkle development is well underway.

To quantify wrinkle dimensions both at QUELTS and at other field sites, a system was developed to obtain low-altitude aerial high-resolution photographs of the GM using a digital single lens reflex camera mounted on the underside of a 6.4 m long helium-filled blimp (Take *et al.* 2007). Each photograph covers an area of approximately 19 m by 28 m when taken with a 50 mm lens at a height of 60 m. A grid of ground control points at 5 m spacing along each GM seam was surveyed to provide exact locations for digital image alignment. To correct for distortion that can arise due to camera orientation (especially with respect to the side slope), the image pixel coordinates were correlated to real world coordinates using the known locations of the control grid points and the image was geometrically corrected through image transformation to create a constant scale factor of

1 pixel to 0.01 m to allow accurate measurement of distance in the image (Take *et al.* 2007). Using the control points, the individual photographs were stitched together to create a single master image of the GM over the site. Figure 12 shows a portion of one such image for the base of the landfill at QUELTS on 28 May 2008 when the ambient temperature was 11°C but the liner was 53°C. Using these photos, the length, width and area under wrinkles was quantified. In this analysis, only wrinkles with a height greater than 3 cm were quantified since smaller wrinkles have a reasonable chance of being suppressed when the GM is covered. Larger wrinkles are likely to remain after covering (Stone 1984; Soong and Koerner 1998; Gudina and Brachman 2006; Brachman and Gudina 2008).

The wrinkle pattern shown in Figure 12 has two distinct sets of orthogonal wrinkles; one running east to west in the roll direction across the site at a spacing of about 3.3 m and the other running north to south at a spacing of about 4.1-4.4 m (GCL panel width between overlaps; range is because different products may have different roll widths). The first set corresponds to the locations of folds in the blown-film GM created during manufacture while the second set corresponds to the locations of GCL panel overlaps. There are additional smaller wrinkles, many of which connect to the longitudinal features. At the time this photo was taken, the connected wrinkle length on the approximately 80 m long and almost 20 m wide base (area of 0.14 ha) was 1400 m and the area under wrinkles represented 22% of the total area of the base. Had the GM been covered with the gravel leachate collection system at this time, then any hole aligning with any wrinkle forming part of the connected network would allow fluid to migrate laterally with no real resistance to other points below the network over a length of about 1400 m.

Monitoring at QUELTS (Rowe *et al.* 2011b) has indicated that while wrinkles may occasionally reach 0.2 m in height and 0.5 m in width, this is rare. The average wrinkle height is about 0.06 m and the width (*2b*) is between about 0.2 m and 0.25 m over most of the day (Rowe *et al.* 2011b). The average daily wrinkle width was 0.20 m and 0.22 m on the base and slope respectively with a standard deviation of 0.04 m in both cases (Rowe *et al.* 2011b). There is an approximately bi-linear relationship between the length of connected wrinkles and the area of wrinkles (Rowe *et al.* 2011b). When wrinkles first start to form they are mostly independent; the connected wrinkle length increases slowly to about 200 m with increasing area of wrinkles until a total of about 8% of the area is wrinkled. Once this threshold is passed the wrinkles interconnect and the connected wrinkle length grows rapidly with further increase in area under wrinkles, reaching over 2000 m when 30%

of the site was wrinkled even for this relatively small site (Rowe *et al.* 2011b). At this site, to keep the connected wrinkle length below 200 m during the normal construction season (May to October) the GM generally would need to be covered before 8:00 am or after 4:00 pm. If this was done and considering the site size (with 0.14 ha base and 0.17 ha side slope) one could infer that there would be about 6 to 7 connected wrinkles per hectare with $L \leq 200$ m. Evidence that wrinkles are in fact covered is confirmed by field observations (e.g., Figure 13).

Thus, if there were 2.5 to 5 holes/ha, there is a reasonable probability that, if covered under these conditions, there would be at least one hole in an connected wrinkle of length $L \leq 200$ m. If covered later in the day the probability of a hole in a wrinkle increases as does the length of the connected wrinkles. If the GM were covered near 1:30 pm, assuming 5 holes/ha, there would be about a 50% probability that a randomly located hole would align with a wrinkle with $L \geq 1500$ m. However the probability is even higher because holes are not going to be purely random but, rather, are more likely at wrinkles. The rationale behind this statement is twofold. First, in the short-term, field observations suggest that the risk of damage due to the placement of the overlying drainage material/ballast is high since it is closer to the bulldozer blade and tracks than the rest of the GM (Figure 13). Second, in the longer term, the tensile strains in the GM are higher at the wrinkle than away from the wrinkle (Gudina and Brachman 2006, 2011; Brachman and Gudina 2008). Thus wrinkles that are locked in after covering provide a potential source for holes and conduit for transmission of flow through the hole. Because of their linear nature, they also can serve to dam-up the leachate as it flows on a relatively flat slope (e.g. Figure 11) in the drainage layer on the landfill base, with leachate levels building up to the height of the wrinkles (Figures 12 and 13) which can easily be 0.06 m and up to as much as about 0.2m in typical situations at the time of covering (Rowe *et al.* 2011b).

The low-altitude aerial photogrammetric system developed by Take *et al.* (2007) has been used to quantify wrinkles at six different sites (including QUELTS) in eastern Canada with generally similar findings. For example, Chappel *et al.* (2011) examined wrinkling of a smooth 1.5 mm thick HDPE GM placed over a GCL on the 55 m by 140 m base of a MSW landfill located at 44°23 N 79°43 W on 11 June 2007. As with QUELTS, the wrinkles varied over the course of the day, with the total area beneath wrinkles ranging from 3% at 8:45 am, 20% at 12:25 pm and 7% at 5:15 pm. The wrinkle width varied between 0.12 m and 0.4 m but the average value was quite consistent throughout the day ranging between 0.22 m and 0.24 m with an overall daily average of 0.23 m.

The connected wrinkle length increased from 30 m at 8:45 am to 2500 m at 1:45 pm. The base of this landfill was effectively divided into four approximately equal sub-areas of about 0.2 ha by sandbags at about 3 m spacing. This generally isolated the sub-areas with respect to wrinkles and hence limited the length of connected wrinkle. The longest wrinkle ($L = 2500$ m) actually broke through between two sub-areas where a sand bag was missing. Had the sand bag been present the longest connected wrinkle would have been about 1550 m. This demonstrates that unless the lateral extent of wrinkling is constrained, the presence of linear wrinkle features along (and across) rolls related to linear geometric imperfections (e.g., folds in blown-film extruded GM, seams in flat dye extruded GMs, GCL overlaps, track marks on CCLs, etc.) that typically develop, the likely connected wrinkle length will increase with the size of the unrestrained area (other things being equal).

Chappel *et al.* (2008) examined a 140 m wide by 65 m long 3H:1V slope covered with a 1.5 mm thick textured GM in July 2006. The maximum ambient temperature during monitoring was 28°C. A statistical analysis of the wrinkle network on the slope indicated that 92% of wrinkles had a width of between 0.1 and 0.3 m with an average wrinkle width of 0.21 m (standard deviation = 0.06 m).

In summary, based on the presently available data, it can be concluded that although wrinkles may reach heights of 0.2 m or more and widths up to 0.5 m on occasion, a detailed analysis of a very large number of wrinkles at a number of sites at different times of day and year indicate that for 1.5 mm thick (smooth or textured) HDPE GM, at least during the typical eastern Canadian construction season, wrinkles were typically about 0.06 m high and about ($2b \approx$) 0.2 m to 0.3 m wide. The typical width did not change significantly over most of the day. The connected length varied substantially with time of day and to some extent with the size of the unconstrained area. If the GM were covered with the leachate collection layer before 8:00 am in the morning or after about 4:00 pm in the afternoon, then there would have been about 6 to 7 connected wrinkles per hectare with $L \leq 200$ m. This length would increase with the time of day the GM was covered, typically peaking at around 1:00 pm, until the connected length was about 2000 m for areas unrestrained up to about 0.2 ha (and larger for larger unrestrained areas).

5.6 Evaluation of the connected wrinkle length required to explain the observed leakage through composite liners

Considering the observed leakages for the landfills with configurations examined in Table 9, Eq. 6 was used to calculate the length of connected wrinkle with a hole required to explain the range of average monthly leakage and the peak leakages. In performing these calculations, it was assumed that for a new landfill, the head giving rise to the average monthly flow would be low ($h_w = 0.05$ m) but that the peak flow likely corresponded to an infiltration event when the head may well have reached the full design value of $h_w = 0.3$ m. Calculations were performed for the best case and worst case combination of k_L and θ considered in the calculations for direct contact (Table 9) as well as a number of other combinations to show the effect that these parameters have on the wrinkle length required to explain a given leakage (Table 10).

The worse (i.e., higher) the values of k_L and θ , the shorter is the connected wrinkle length (with a hole) required to explain a given leakage (Table 10). For the composite liners with a 0.9 m CCL, the different combinations of parameters and range of average monthly leakages observed for several different landfills over a period of time correspond to connected wrinkle lengths, L , of $35 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 730 \text{ m}$ while the peak flows correspond to $180 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 1400 \text{ m}$. The difference in lengths for average monthly flows and peak flows are not surprising given that most landfills have a base slope to the sump and the higher leachate heads associated with a significant rainfall event have a higher probability of interconnection with more holed wrinkles than the lower heads corresponding to average flow. Since there was good construction quality (CQA/CQC) at these landfills one might expect good contact conditions ($\theta \sim 2 \times 10^{-8} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$) and after some consolidation under the weight of the waste a specified $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9} \text{ m/s}$ is likely to decrease to $1 \times 10^{-9} \text{ m/s} \leq k_L \leq 5 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m/s}$. For these conditions the connected wrinkle lengths required to explain average monthly flows are $85 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 380 \text{ m}$ while the peak flows correspond to $440 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 620 \text{ m}$.

For composite liners with a GCL, the lowest monthly leakages were very small and suggest little or no role for wrinkles, however, leakage for the upper end of the range of average monthly flows corresponds to the connected wrinkle lengths of $270 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 1800 \text{ m}$ while the peak flows correspond to $250 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 1700 \text{ m}$. Assuming an average transmissivity for sodium bentonite at 50 kPa (based on data in Table 6) of $\theta = 2 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}$ and $2 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m/s} \leq k_L \leq 5 \times 10^{-11} \text{ m/s}$, the wrinkle lengths required to explain the peak average monthly flows are $400 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 1300 \text{ m}$ while the peak flows correspond to $390 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 1200 \text{ m}$ with the most likely range (allowing for some interaction

between the GCL and leachate in the low stress zone below the wrinkle so that $2 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m/s} \leq k_L \leq 1 \times 10^{-10} \text{ m/s}$ being about 400 m to 700 m for both peak average monthly and peak leakages.

While care is needed not to over-interpret these results, it would appear that at low heads, connected wrinkle lengths (with a hole) of $85 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 700 \text{ m}$ and at higher heads $400 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 700 \text{ m}$ most likely explain the observed leakages. These lengths are consistent with what one would expect based on the field studies reported in the previous section if the GM was covered when the area of base with wrinkles was between about 3% and 15%. For the climatic conditions of southern Ontario (Rowe *et al.* 2011b) this would correspond to generally covering before about 10:00 am or after about 2:30 pm (i.e., not when wrinkling is most extensive, around the middle of the day). This is also consistent with the findings that wrinkles with height greater than about 3 cm are likely to remain after loading due to placing of the waste (Stone 1984; Soong and Koerner 1998; Gudina and Brachman 2006; Brachman and Gudina 2008).

Considering the foregoing and the findings of the previous section and assuming good CQA/CQC, it can be tentatively concluded that if care is taken not to cover the GM with the leachate collection layer during a period of massive wrinkling (i.e., when more than 15% of the area is wrinkled), that for landfill design purposes, one could assume one holed wrinkle per hectare with an connected wrinkle length $L < 700 \text{ m}$. If additional care is taken to limit the area of wrinkles to less than about 10%, for design purposes one could assume one holed wrinkle per hectare with a connected wrinkle length $L < 500 \text{ m}$. For 5% wrinkled area the corresponding length is $L < 150 \text{ m}$ and for 3% wrinkled area, $L < 100 \text{ m}$. When wrinkles are eliminated (e.g., Figure 8), the direct contact solutions become applicable.

5.7 Calculated leakage for composite liners with wrinkles

To provide insight regarding the magnitude of leakage that might be expected in landfill liners (design head $h_w = 0.3 \text{ m}$) for a number of composite liner configurations, leakage was calculated for connected wrinkles (with a hole) of lengths 100, 200 and 700 m (based on the discussion in the previous section). As indicated in the discussion of interface transmissivity, leakage does not appear to be affected by a change from sodium to calcium bentonite and hence may not be significantly affected by interaction with leachate; thus θ was kept constant for a given CL.

For composite primary liners (Figure 6 but with a wrinkle) in a double liner system with a leak detection layer immediately below the liner ($h_a = 0 \text{ m}$), the calculated leakage is given in Table 11.

For typical CCL design $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s in good contact with the GM, the calculated leakage is less than 100 lphd if the connected wrinkle length is less than about 120 m but becomes reasonably large once the connected wrinkle length approaches 200 m. Some consolidation of the liner may be expected to reduce the hydraulic conductivity. Assuming consolidation reduces k_L to 5×10^{-10} m/s there is a reduction in leakage (Table 11) but it is still desirable to keep connected wrinkles to less than 200 m. However, even with a 700 m connected wrinkle, the leakages are:

- still less than for a GM alone (Table 2) for five extremely small ($r_o = 0.5$ mm) holes/ha;
- two orders of magnitude smaller than for a GM alone with five same sized holes/ha as considered here ($r_o = 5.6$ mm); and
- almost three times less than for a CCL alone ($k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s).

For a CCL, the width of the wrinkle is small compared to the thickness of the CCL and most of the leakage occurs due to migration of fluid in the transmissive zone away from the wrinkle. Therefore, the actual width of the wrinkle has relatively little effect on the leakage (the leakage for $2b = 0.2$ m is only 1 to 2% more than that for $2b = 0.1$ m) for the CCL cases examined in Table 11 and thus the effect of the weight of the waste on consolidation of the CCL can be considered to apply to the entire leaking area with negligible error. However this is not the case for GCLs because:

- (a) the thickness of the GCL is much smaller than the wrinkle width and the stress due to the weight of the waste only causes consolidation for the GCL outside the wrinkle that remains after compression due to the waste while the GCL below the wrinkle has very little stress and will be more susceptible to clay-leachate interaction; and
- (b) the interface transmissivity is so low that the area under the wrinkle contributes significantly to the leakage, thus the leakage for $2b = 0.2$ m is 40 to 60% more than for $2b = 0.1$ m for the cases examined in Table 11 and hence the hydraulic conductivity of the GCL below the wrinkle plays a more significant role in the leakage than is the case for a CCL.

As indicated in an earlier section, the typical width of a wrinkle at the time of covering is about 0.2 to 0.3 m. Brachman and Gudina (2008) demonstrated that with an applied pressure of 250 kPa this wrinkle width reduces to about half the initial value, and since Table 11 corresponds to landfill applications, a value of $2b = 0.1$ m was adopted for the calculation reported in that table.

For a GCL, a value of $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s could correspond to permeation with water at a low stress (≤ 15 kPa) or after considering clay-leachate interaction at a high stress (100kPa) as discussed earlier. For this case the leakage is very small ($Q < 10$ lphd) for $L \leq 200$ m and only 21

lphd for $L = 700$ m. This estimate may be somewhat optimistic because below the wrinkle itself the stress is quite low even if there is a substantial amount of waste and hence below the wrinkle k_L may be 2×10^{-10} m/s. If the entire layer had this hydraulic conductivity the leakage is increased to 17 lphd for $L \leq 200$ m and 61 lphd for $L = 700$ m. However, this calculation overestimates the leakage, which would be expected to lie between that given for the two values of k_L considered. An estimate of likely leakage was obtained by assuming $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s below the wrinkle and $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s outside the wrinkle; this gives a leakage of 14 lphd for $L \leq 200$ m and less than 50 lphd for $L = 700$ m. These leakages are very small compared to those for a GM alone (Table 2) or a GCL alone (Table 3), demonstrating that a composite liner with a GCL can be extremely effective even with wrinkles up to 700 m long and considering an increase in hydraulic conductivity due to clay-leachate interaction.

The results for the single composite liner over an attenuation layer (Figures 7 and 10; Table 11) show the same general trends as discussed above for the primary composite liner in a double lined system except that there is a somewhat higher leakage through the composite with a GCL because of the much larger hydraulic gradient across the thin GCL in this case (although the leakages are still substantially smaller than for the case with a CCL). Assuming $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s below the wrinkle and $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s outside the wrinkle, the calculated leakage is ≤ 31 lphd for $L \leq 200$ m and 110 lphd for $L = 700$ m. Thus even with a 700 m long connected wrinkle (with a hole) per hectare, the leakage is substantially less than for a GM alone (Table 2) or CL alone (Table 3).

In a leachate lagoon application it is important that the liner be covered with a suitable soil (typically about 0.3 m thick), interlocking brick, cast concrete or some other suitable protection layer to avoid damage (e.g., Rowe *et al.* 2003), however the stress due to this protection layer may be expected to provide very little benefit with respect to improving k_L due to consolidation. Thus, results are only shown for CCLs with $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s. For the GCL, $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s is possible at low stress provided that there is no significant clay-leachate interaction or cation exchange with the underlying soil but a value around $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s may be more likely with significant leachate interaction or cation exchange. Under these low stress conditions and with an aggressive leachate, $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s is also possible.

The leakages for the lagoon case (Table 12) are larger than for the landfill case examined above (Table 11) due to the much larger head and corresponding gradient. The width of the wrinkle ($2b = 0.2$ m) is also greater since the applied stress is much lower in a lagoon application than in a landfill

application. While the leakages are substantially smaller than what would be expected for a GM with five similar ($r_o = 5.6$ mm) holes/ha (Table 2) or a CL (Table 3) alone for similar k_L , the control of wrinkles is quite important for limiting leakage through the composite liner, especially if there is clay-leachate interaction with the GCL. The leakages with the GCL (even with clay-leachate interaction and/or cation exchange giving $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s) were less than 500 lphd for $L \leq 200$ m compared to $\leq 1,000$ lphd for a CCL with $L \leq 200$ m. For a primary composite liner underlain by a LDS, the leakage is large if GCL-leachate interaction led to $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s. With the same k_L but the GCL in a composite liner with an attenuation layer, the leakage is substantially reduced to ≤ 670 lphd for $L \leq 200$ m.

For leachate lagoons where interaction between the GCL and leachate is a significant concern (i.e., where $k_L \sim 2 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s might be anticipated) the use of a composite liner with a GCL and CCL together can result in a substantial reduction in leakage as shown in the last row of Table 12. Here the GCL serves to restrict the lateral migration of leachate between the GM and the GCL due to its good interface transmissivity while the thickness of the CCL controls the leakage in the zones beneath the wrinkle and out to where leachate can migrate between the GM and GCL. For this case the leakage was 63 lphd for $L \leq 200$ m and 220 lphd for $L = 700$ m. Similar values are obtained for a GM, GCL and 0.6 m CCL in a primary liner underlain by a LDS.

6. OTHER FACTORS INFLUENCING LONG TERM LEAKAGE

6.1 Issues specific to ponds/lagoons

When dealing with lagoons and ponds, leakage through composite liners may be more complicated than implied by the previous discussion, especially if the GM is not covered by a suitable ballast layer. If the stresses at the hole are hydrostatic, or nearly hydrostatic, the water pressure beneath the GM is only slightly less than the pressures above GM near the hole. Since HDPE has a specific gravity less than that of water it has potential to float, reducing or eliminating the composite liner action, if the weight of the ballast layer is not sufficient to adequately counter this effect. Furthermore some liquids are biologically active and the migration of bacteria and nutrients between the GM and CL may generate gas (e.g., methane and carbon dioxide) that can lift the GM reducing or eliminating the composite liner action, if the weight of the ballast layer is not sufficient to adequately counter this effect. This situation will be aggravated by the presence of wrinkles. Furthermore even if the unprotected GM was installed with no holes, it is very prone to

damage unless there is an adequate protection layer. Rowe *et al.* (2003) describe a case where the GM was badly damaged and became ineffective within 4 years of its installation. Thus unballasted exposed geomembranes may have very limited (or no) benefit as part of a composite liner system. To realize the composite liner action discussed in this paper there needs to be a suitable inorganic (e.g., granular soil, interlocking brick or concrete) ballast/protection layer. Given the challenges of ensuring good composite liner action in pond/lagoon applications, an argument can be made that the only dependable leakage control for an important pond (e.g. one containing fluids that should not escape to the underlying groundwater system) is to have a double liner with leakage control, monitoring and maintenance (Thiel and Giroud 2011).

6.2 GCL overlaps

In addition to considering the factors that influence the hydraulic conductivity of the GCL and hence leakage through the GCL (especially when there are wrinkles), it is also important to consider the factors that could influence the potential for leakage between GCL rolls. To provide a hydraulic barrier at the edges of the GCL rolls, they are typically physically overlapped by between 150 mm and 300 mm (Figure 14), with the amount varying from one manufacturer's recommendation to another. Depending on the manufacturer, it may or may not be recommended that supplemental powdered bentonite be placed between the GCL panels at the overlap to reduce the risk of preferential flow at this location.

Several investigators have examined the hydraulic performance of GCL overlaps under uniform vertical stress (e.g., Estornell and Daniel 1992; Cooley and Daniel 1995; Daniel *et al.* 1997; Benson *et al.* 2004). These studies showed that the effectiveness of overlaps was, to some extent, dependent on the method of GCL manufacture and, most critically, on the amount and consistency of the placement of bentonite between the overlapped GCL panels. Generally, provided that there was adequate overlap (150 mm) and adequate and consistent supplemental bentonite between the panels, good performance was observed such that the overlap was not a weak point (i.e., leakage would be controlled by the GCL away from the overlap rather than the overlap itself). Application of a uniform vertical stress generally improved overlap performance. However, Dickinson and Brachman (2006) demonstrated that wrinkles can give rise to non-uniform stresses on an underlying GCL when subjected to vertical overburden pressure. Although they were not considering overlaps in their experiments, this work does raise the question as to what effect non-

uniform vertical stresses could have on GCL overlap performance. Two potentially significant scenarios can be envisaged where (i) the GCL overlap runs parallel to and below a wrinkle (e.g., see Figure 12 where the long north-south wrinkles all align with GCL panel overlaps) and (ii) the panel overlap is perpendicular to longitudinal wrinkles (as is the case where the north-south panel overlaps in Figure 12 intersect the east-west wrinkles). In both cases, there is potential for the non-uniform stresses to cause opening of the overlap if the overlap is not sufficient. Brachman *et al.* (2011) reported the results from the first tests conducted to examine whether GM wrinkle deformations and stress conditions can have an adverse effect on the GCL overlap. Their initial tests with a 150 mm overlap parallel to the wrinkle indicated no adverse impact; however, additional testing is required to identify if there are conditions where there could be an adverse impact.

6.3 GCL panel shrinkage

The overlap of GCL panels may vary with time if the GCL or composite liner is not covered quickly with the drainage layer or another suitable layer that will minimize thermal cycles since the high GM temperatures that cause wrinkling of GMs may also cause moisture loss from partially (or fully) hydrated GCLs. Thiel and Richardson (2005) were the first to publicly document shrinkage of reinforced GCLs covered by a GM and left exposed (i.e., with no overlying cover soil). Koerner and Koerner (2005a, 2005b) reported additional cases where GCL panels had either lost a portion of their original overlap or had completely separated. Thiel *et al.* (2006) summarized six cases where GCL panels reported to have originally been overlapped by 0.15 m had separated, leaving a gap between panels of between 0.20 and 1.20 m after periods of exposure of between 2 and 60 months. The loss of panel overlap has occurred both on side slopes and on relatively gently sloping bases (Table 13). In cases where separation occurs, the composite action is lost. If separation were to occur at a location where there is a wrinkle (as it has for some, but not all, GCL products tested at QUELTS—future publication forthcoming) the leakage would be controlled by the size of the hole in the GM at the wrinkle and the head and would be given by Eq. 1. Thus, avoiding the loss of panel overlap is critical to ensuring composite liner performance.

Extensive laboratory studies (e.g., Thiel *et al.* 2006; Bostwick *et al.* 2007, 2008, 2010; Rowe *et al.* 2009a, 2010a, 2011a, 2011c; Brachman *et al.* 2010; Thiel and Rowe 2010; Joshi *et al.* 2011) have been conducted to help understand the factors affecting panel shrinkage and some potential

solutions. The research has highlighted the complexity of the issue. Based on the research reported in the references cited above, GCL panel shrinkage appears to be influenced by:

- *Method of GCL manufacture.* When subjected to the same wet-dry cycling (e.g., in pan tests reported by Thiel *et al.* 2006; Bostwick *et al.* 2010; Rowe *et al.* 2011a) all GCLs experience significant shrinkage (with some shrinking more than others depending on the method of manufacture). However in the field the shrinkage depends on the moisture cycles the GCL experiences and it has been found that the method of manufacture can significantly affect a number of factors influencing the magnitude of the moisture cycles in a given environment, including the water retention curve (Beddoe *et al.* 2011) and the uptake and loss of moisture both under isothermal conditions (Rayhani *et al.* 2011) and when subjected to thermal cycles (e.g., Rowe *et al.* 2011c). As a consequence, the method of GCL manufacture does affect the actual shrinkage observed both in the laboratory but especially in the field under nominally identical conditions with some GCLs being much more prone to shrinkage than others (even from the same manufacturer).
- *Variability in the distribution of bentonite mass within a specimen:* the greater the non-uniformity of bentonite mass distribution, the greater was the shrinkage. Variability was most evident in GCLs having lower average bentonite mass per unit area.
- *Initial moisture content:* the greater the initial (e.g., off the roll) moisture content, the greater the initial and accumulated shrinkage during the first five wet-dry cycles but this did not notably affect the final equilibrium shrinkage after many cycles.
- *Moisture content to which the GCL can hydrate between drying cycle:* wet-dry cycles that only allowed the GCL to hydrate to a moisture content of about 60% took much longer (many more cycles) to reach (almost the same) final equilibrium shrinkage than specimens allowed to hydrate to about 100% moisture content between drying cycles.
- *Change in moisture content due to daily thermal cycles:* This highly dependent on the initial moisture content and the water retention curve of the foundation soil.
- *Daily and seasonal thermal cycles to which the GCL is subjected:* it would appear that variable weather conditions that give rise to many overcast days followed by a sunny day may have more effect on shrinkage than consistent sunny (or overcast) days as this allows more moisture uptake by the GCL before it experiences a severe drying cycle.

- *Bonding between GCL panels*: this may occur fortuitously (and hence cannot be relied on in design) due to hydration followed by drying of supplemental bentonite between overlapped panels (Brachman *et al.* 2010) or intentionally by heat tacking the overlaps (Thiel and Thiel 2009; Rowe *et al.* 2010a; Joshi *et al.* 2011).

Factors that appear to have relatively minor to no influence on the percent shrinkage include:

- Size and aspect ratio of the GCL panel; and
- The dry mass per unit area of the product provided that the bentonite is evenly distributed.

The shrinkage strain required to cause the loss of 150 to 300 mm panel overlap could be mobilized in about 5 wet-dry cycles of the magnitude examined by Thiel *et al.* (2006), Bostwick *et al.* (2010) or Rowe *et al.* (2011a). Thus shrinkage could occur relatively quickly under some circumstances.

There is evidence that in field applications, panel separation can occur in less than two months in some situations while under other circumstances a composite liner with a different GCL product can be exposed for up to five years without any significant shrinkage. These differences are likely a result of a combination of the factors noted above.

There are ways of minimizing potential GCL shrinkage and hence panel separation. The best mitigative measure is to place panels with 300 mm of overlap and then place the drainage layer (or other cover soil) over the composite liner as quickly as possible after placement of the GM over the GCL. In cases where it may not be practical to cover the composite liner quickly, other options for composite liners with GCLs include: (a) using a GCL that has demonstrated relatively low shrinkage in the field (e.g., a scrim-reinforced needle-punched GCL with thermal treatment), and/or (b) mechanically bonding the overlaps (e.g., by sewing or heat tacking). The available data would suggest that both approaches may substantially reduce the risk of panel separation, however at this time there is no assurance that either approach will prevent panel separation under worst case conditions; one should still cover the composite liner as quickly as possible.

6.4 Desiccation of CCLs in exposed composite liners

To achieve low hydraulic conductivity, CCLs are typically compacted at 2 to 4% above standard Proctor optimum water content. This is often close to the plastic limit. If the CCL is left exposed to the sun and wind, or if a GM over a CCL is left exposed to the sun, drying of the clay from its as-compacted state will quickly result in desiccation cracking of the CCL (Basset and Bruner 1993; Bowders *et al.* 1997). Even if this cracking only extends to a depth of a few centimetres (Figure 3),

it can still significantly affect leakage since the desiccation crack substantially increases the transmissivity of the GM/CCL interface. If left too long (and this could be as little as a day in some cases), the cracking can be sufficient to cause composite liner action to be effectively lost. The leakage will then be controlled by either Eq. 1 and the size of the hole and head (e.g. Table 2), or by Darcy's law (Eq. 3) and the hydraulic gradient and hydraulic conductivity of the CCL (Tables 3, 4 and 5). Thus quick covering is critical for composite liners with CCLs to minimize construction related desiccation cracking of the CCL. The potential desiccation that can occur while waiting for the results of quality assurance tests on GM seams must be carefully considered when constructing composite liners with CCLs.

6.5 Waste-generated liner temperature

Rowe and Islam (2009) updated the catalogue of observed temperatures in different landfills reported by Rowe (2005). Figure 15 shows even more recent data for the Keele Valley Landfill which received 28 million tonnes of MSW from the greater Toronto area between the first acceptance of waste in 1984 and closure in December 2002. In the oldest cell of the landfill (1984), the annual average liner temperature increased to 34°C over the first 14 years and has remained at an average of 35.5°C over the past 14 years. At a location where waste was first placed in 1990, the annual average liner temperature increased to 39°C over the first 13 years and peaked at 42°C in year 14. Over the past 10 years the average temperature has been 39.4°C. At a third location where waste was first placed in 1991, the annual average temperature increased to 35°C over the first 12 years and has averaged 35.1°C for the last 10 years.

Other investigators (e.g., Needham and Knox 2008) have also reported liner temperatures of 32 to 40°C across the base of "normal" MSW landfills. Substantially higher liner temperatures (50 to 60°C) have been observed for cases where there has been significant moisture augmentation. Although there are no explicit liner temperature measurements, waste temperatures of 60 to 80°C at locations only a few metres above the liner have been observed in some unusual MSW landfills with leachate temperatures of 50 to 60°C (the reason for these higher than expected temperature are unknown at the time of writing). For ashfills, temperatures of 50 to 90°C have been observed 3 m above the liner and leachate temperatures of 65 to 70°C have been recorded. Most recently, Calder and Stark (2010) reported that landfills containing reactive wastes, such as aluminum production wastes, have been observed to generate waste temperatures in the landfill greater than 100°C and in

some cases in excess of 143°C and temperatures in excess of 85°C in leachate collection systems near the geomembrane (Stark *et al.* 2011). Table 14 summarizes temperature ranges for a number of different environments.

More data on long-term liner temperatures is required; however, it is clear that significant temperatures can be generated in landfills and on landfill liners and in other applications for composite liners. As yet there is a paucity of data regarding how long peak temperatures will be maintained, but the available data does show that it is certainly more than a decade.

6.6 Desiccation due to waste-generated temperature

When a composite landfill liner is heated to a temperature higher than the soil at depth, heat flows downward toward the cooler area. This causes a downward migration of water vapour from the GCL and the underlying subsoil to a cooler depth where it condenses. The consequent decrease in moisture content of warmer areas causes liquid water to move upward along the capillary potential gradient. Moisture migration increases the soil's permeability to water vapour making it easier for the downward movement of water vapour but at the same time reducing the unsaturated hydraulic conductivity in the underlying soil nearest to the liner, making upward movement of water more difficult. Thus a point is reached where the upward liquid flux cannot balance the downward flux of water vapour. This can cause drying and possibly desiccation cracking in both CCLs and GCLs (Collins 1993; Southen and Rowe 2005; Rowe 2005; Azad *et al.* 2011a). Zhou and Rowe (2003) developed a model that can be used to indentifying when tension and desiccation is likely to be initiated in situations where there is applied external vertical stress but does not to simulate the cracking after it is initiated. Since the objective of design is to ensure that desiccation is not initiated, this limitation is of no practical significance. Approaches that model desiccation once initiated (e.g., Amarasiri *et al.* 2011) are not suitable for modelling the case of a buried composite liner (but may, subject to verification, be appropriate for exposed composite liners). The Zhou and Rowe (2003) model was used to examine compacted clay liners by Zhou and Rowe (2005).

Southen and Rowe (2005) reported an experimental study of single composite liners subjected to thermal gradients of between 25 and 29°C/m. The temperature at the GM was kept at approximately 55°C and overburden stresses of 15 to 95 kPa were examined. They found that when the silty sand subsoil they examined had an initial moisture content of around 12 to 13% there was no desiccation. In many cases where the initial moisture content of the subsoil was 4 to 7%,

however, significant desiccation was observed even with a surcharge of 70 to 80 kPa. Thus for a given temperature gradient, the initial moisture content of the subsoil below the GCL greatly affects the potential for GCL desiccation with the risk increasing with lower initial subsoil moisture contents. These results were for one specific subsoil and the moisture content at which desiccation occurs may vary with the soil grainsize distribution and water retention curve of the subsoil; this requires more investigation. They reported that the nature of the GCL product may influence the potential for desiccation with one of the GCLs examined being less prone to desiccation under otherwise similar conditions than others. Higher bentonite mass per unit area and greater carrier geotextile thickness appeared to reduce desiccation potential for the conditions examined. The greater the temperature gradient, the greater was the potential for desiccation cracking.

Azad *et al.* (2011a) followed the experimental work by Southen and Rowe (2005) on single composite liners by considering GCLs in double composite liners. This study showed that, for GCLs underlain by a silty sand in both primary and secondary liners in the double liner systems examined, there was no GCL desiccation for initial subsoil moisture content $\geq 10\%$ and primary GM temperature $< 40^\circ\text{C}$. For a primary composite liner, desiccation cracking did occur on a foundation layer at 10 to 11% initial moisture content and a GM temperature of 45°C . For a secondary composite liner, desiccation was observed when the subsoil below the GCL had an initial moisture content of about 5% and the primary GM temperature was 40°C . Thus, unless care is taken to ensure the subsoil has an appropriate initial moisture content, desiccation cracking may occur even at the upper end of the temperature range for a normal MSW landfill.

For GCLs in a primary composite liner resting directly on a geonet drainage layer, it was found that the risk of desiccation was greatest for GCLs at low initial moisture content. Thus in these situations it is desirable for the GCL to hydrate before a significant thermal gradient is applied.

Both Southen and Rowe (2005) and Azad *et al.* (2011a) conducted hydraulic conductivity tests on desiccated GCL samples. They found that for all three products tested (one Canadian, one European and one Australian), the desiccated GCL self-healed during permeation and the hydraulic conductivity decreased from a desiccated k_L of 1×10^{-9} to 1×10^{-8} m/s to the healed $k_L \leq 2 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s when permeated with clean water. This situation may not have been as good had the desiccated GCL been permeated with a leachate.

The experiments reported by Southen and Rowe (2005) and Azad *et al.* (2011a) have been modelled using the Zhou and Rowe (2003) model (Southen and Rowe 2011 and Azad *et al.* 2011b

respectively) and the model was found to give very encouraging agreement with the experimental observations.

In summary, there is potential for desiccation of GCLs even at traditional MSW landfill liner temperatures (35 to 40°C) under conditions of low stress and where the foundation soil has low initial moisture content. Thus, placement of a GCL over relatively dry subsoil (< 10% initial moisture content) should be avoided for landfill applications. Increasing stress was shown to reduce the potential for desiccation (other things being equal). As the liner temperature increased, the risk of desiccation increases and thus special care is required for waste that can generate heat in excess of about 30 to 40°C on the liner (e.g., MSW incinerator ash containing aluminum, reactive wastes, and MSW waste when the landfill is operated as a bioreactor; see Table 14).

6.7 Geomembrane service life

As demonstrated in previous sections, a composite liner can be extremely effective at controlling leakage from a landfill or lagoon. This is only the case as long as the GM remains relatively intact (i.e., with only the holes that occur in the short-term as discussed earlier). GMs do, however, have a finite service life. The likely failure scenario for GM liners involves: (a) Stage I: depletion of protective antioxidants from the GM (monitored in terms of an index quantity called the Oxidative Induction Time, OIT); (b) Stage II: a period between depletion of antioxidants and measurable physical degradation of the GM (e.g., environmental stress crack resistance, SCR or tensile properties); (c) Stage III: oxidative degradation of the HDPE that decreases properties such as the strength at break or stress crack resistance; and (d) Failure: cracking in the GM due to low stress crack resistance combined with tensile stresses. Traditionally the nominal service-life is said to have been reached when the physical property of interest (in this case SCR) has decreased to 50% of its original value (Hsuan and Koerner 1998). However many GMs have initial SCR much higher (600 hours to over 5000 hours) than the usually specified value (which is typically 300 hours). Since it does not seem appropriate to judge the GM to have reached nominal failure when its SCR is still above the specified value, an alternative definition of nominal service life of the GM is proposed to be the time from installation to when the physical property of interest (e.g., SCR) has decreased to 50% of the specified value. The actual service-life of the GM (i.e., the time to actual failure) may be taken to be the time to when it no longer acts as an effective barrier to fluids in a liner.

Rowe (2005) provided a detailed discussion of the information available up to early 2005 with respect to the service life of HDPE GMs. Since that time, considerable research has been conducted to further address questions regarding the service life of HDPE GMs (Rowe and Rimal 2008a, 2008b; Rowe *et al.* 2008, 2009b, 2010b, 2010c). The key findings from the work reported in these papers for the HDPE GMs and conditions examined can be summarized as follows:

- The service life of an HDPE GM is dependent on the polyethylene resin, the carbon black and the antioxidant package in the specific GM. Even for a given manufacturer these may vary from time to time and the service life predictions in the cited publications are only for GMs with properties similar to or better than those tested; they do not apply to all HDPE GMs;
- The antioxidant depletion time (Stage I) was shorter for GMs immersed in simulated MSW leachate than for GMs immersed in water. The longest depletion time (Stage I) was measured for GMs in air;
- When immersed in water and leachate, antioxidant depletion was primarily associated with outward diffusion of antioxidants to the adjacent liquid;
- Using Arrhenius modeling for the GM tested, the predicted antioxidant depletion time (Stage I) at a typical MSW liner temperature of 35°C was about 10 years in leachate, 35 years in water and 65 years in air;
- The key component of MSW leachate with respect to depletion of antioxidants (Stage I) is surfactant (soaps). Even a relatively small amount of surfactant can substantially increase the rate of antioxidant depletion;
- GM thickness has a significant effect on the depletion of antioxidants (Stage I). A 2.5 mm GM had an approximately 50% longer time to antioxidant depletion than a 1.5 mm GM;
- Using Arrhenius modelling for the GM tested, the antioxidant depletion time for a GM at a typical MSW landfill liner temperature of 35°C was estimated to be 10 years for the GM immersed in leachate, 40 years for the GM in a composite liner with a traditional GTX protection layer, 50 years with a 15 mm thick sand protection layer above the GTX and 65 years when the GM was separated from the leachate by an overlying GCL;
- There was no significant effect of 250 kPa of applied stress on the depletion of antioxidants (Stage I).

Rowe and Islam (2009) developed a technique for estimating the service life of HDPE GMs based on the landfill liner temperature-time history and the data available in 2008 for 5 GMs. Figure 16

shows a schematic of the temperature-time history they examined where T_o is the temperature of the liner in the absence of any heat generated by the waste. It was assumed that the liner temperature started at this temperature and remained approximately constant until a time t_1 (which was zero in some cases), after which the temperature increased linearly with time to an average peak temperature T_p at time t_2 . The average peak temperature was assumed to remain constant at this value until time t_3 after which it decreased linearly, returning to T_o at time t_4 . They considered a wide range of temperature-time histories. Table 15 summarizes two of the temperature-time histories examined and the range of estimated service lives for the five GMs for these cases.

The first temperature-time history was based, to the extent that data was available in 2008, on an idealization of the data from the Keele Valley Landfill. As can be seen from Figure 15 what appeared to be a decrease in temperature at year 24 (when the Rowe and Islam paper was written) was an aberration and subsequently the temperature has remained at about 35°C. For the first case considered by Rowe and Islam (Table 15), the estimated GM service lives, while quite variable, were all very long. This is good news for designers of landfills with GMs similar to or better than the five GMs examined and temperature-time histories similar to that examined. However, they also demonstrated that for the same GMs, a change in temperature-time history as considered in the second case (based, to the extent that data is available, on data for a bioreactor landfill with a peak temperature of 60°C) has a profound effect on the estimated GM service life. In this case the range of uncertainty is quite small and the projected service lives of 20 to 30 years are likely to be inadequate for providing the required environmental protection. While recognizing that there is uncertainty associated with the properties of the GMs and especially the assumed temperature-time histories, the difference in estimated service lives for the two cases very clearly demonstrates the critical role that the temperature-time history, and especially the peak temperature, can play in the GM service life. More research is needed into this issue.

Recent (as yet unpublished) studies at Queen's University using geosynthetic landfill liner simulators (see Brachman *et al.* 2008 and Rowe *et al.* 2010c for simulator details) has shown conclusively that when GMs reach the end of their service life they experience extensive stress-cracking and the number of holes goes from a few holes per hectare to 30 to 100 holes per m². At this point the liner can no longer be considered a composite liner and leakage will be controlled by the clay liner component. Under these circumstances, leakage up to that discussed in Section 4 (e.g., see Tables 3 to 5) can be anticipated.

The discussion above was focused on GMs in primary liners. Rowe and Hoor (2009) considered GMs in secondary liners. They examined a number of different liner configurations and modes of landfill operation. This modeling took account of the less severe exposure conditions associated with a secondary GM (using data from Rowe and Rimal 2008b) and the thermal properties of the barrier system. The service life of the secondary GM was shortest for an all-geosynthetic system where the primary composite liner was comprised of a GM/GCL over a geosynthetic drainage layer. Under these conditions, the service life of the secondary GM would be ample for a temperature-time history that did not involve excessive temperatures on the primary liner (e.g., the first case in Table 15), but would not be sufficiently greater than that of the primary GM to provide adequate environmental protection in situations like the second case in Table 15. Rowe and Hoor (2009) showed that the thicker the primary liner (i.e., the larger H_L in Figure 6), the lower the temperature of the secondary GM and hence the longer the service life of the secondary GM. However, even this may not be sufficient to provide an adequate service life if liner temperatures in excess of 40°C are going to be encountered.

The work summarized above shows that it is important to consider the effects of the temperature-time history on both the primary and secondary composite liners when designing landfills. This includes consideration of the effect of temperature on desiccation of clay liners (both CCL and GCL) and on the service life of the GMs. The research has also highlighted the need for long-term monitoring of landfill liner temperature and the need for long-term GM ageing studies that will provide improved data for assessing the likely long-term performance of GMs in MSW landfills.

For applications where the estimated GM or GCL service life (based on the primary liner temperature that may reasonably be expected) is not sufficient, options include: (a) changing the barrier system design (e.g., thickening the primary liner) and/or the choice of materials (e.g., some GMs will have a much longer service life than others); (b) changing the method of landfill operation so as to reduce heat generation (e.g., avoiding reactive wastes, not operating the landfill as a bioreactor, etc.); (c) cooling the primary liner (e.g., Rowe *et al.* 2010d); or (d) insulating the secondary liner from the full effect of the primary liner temperature (e.g., Hoor and Rowe 2011).

7 CONCLUSIONS

This paper has explored factors that can affect the performance of geomembranes (GMs) and clay liners (CLs) with emphasis on geosynthetic clay liners (GCLs) as part of composite liners for containing MSW leachate both in landfills and leachate lagoons. Based on the new analyses presented and data examined herein, the following conclusions have been reached.

Based on the typically assumed 2.5 to 5 holes/ha used for design calculations of leakage through GMs installed with strict CQA/CQC, even very small holes (radius = 0.5 mm) in a GM used as a single liner, would cause leakage of 250 to 500 lphd for a 0.3 m design head in a landfill and 1,000 to 2,000 lphd for a lagoon with 5 m head. For a typical design hole with an area of 1 cm² (radius = 5.6 mm), the corresponding leakages are 32,000 to 63,000 lphd for a 0.3 m head and 130,000 to 260,000 lphd for a 5 m head.

For a single clay liner as part of the primary liner in a double liner system, the leakages assuming typical design hydraulic conductivities are about 1300 lphd for both a GCL ($k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s, $H_L = 0.01$ m) and CCL ($k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s, $H_L = 0.6$ m) for a landfill application with head of 0.3 m and about 22,000 lphd for a GCL and 8,000 lphd for a CCL in a lagoon application ($h_w = 5$ m).

Provided that there is sufficient ballast above the GM to ensure composite liner action (e.g., to avoid GM uplift from the underlying CL), then for 5 holes/ha (each with an area, $a = 1$ cm²) in the GM component of a composite liner in a double liner system where the GM is in direct contact with the CL (i.e., there are no wrinkles), the calculated leakage for a GCL is less than 0.2 lphd even for a hydraulic conductivity as high as 2×10^{-8} m/s and less than 3 lphd for a CCL ($k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s, $H_L = 0.6$ m) for a typical landfill design head ($h_w = 0.3$ m) and less than 2 lphd for a GCL and 36 lphd for a CCL in a lagoon application ($h_w = 5$ m). Thus a well-constructed composite liner where the GM is in direct contact with the CL can result in leakages many orders of magnitude less than that which might be expected for a single GM or CL.

When a clay liner is used as a single liner it is very important to consider the factors that can affect hydraulic conductivity and to adopt a design value relevant to the expected conditions on the site since they may be quite different from “typical” values obtained by permeating a GCL or CCL with water in the laboratory. For a GCL, the typically specified $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s may be a reasonable value for GCLs permeated with water at low (3 to 4 kPa) stress levels and can also closely approximate the values obtained for GCLs permeated with a realistic simulated MSW leachate at stresses of 25 to 35 kPa. However, permeation of a GCL with leachate at low confining

stress (e.g., in leachate lagoon applications) could result in a value of $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s or, in a very extreme case, $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s. On the other hand, at higher stresses applicable to landfill applications, much lower hydraulic conductivities of 7×10^{-12} m/s may be achieved. For CCLs a typical design k_L is 1×10^{-9} m/s. Well-constructed CCLs may achieve $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s or even $k_L \leq 1 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s after consolidation; however, a CCL could also have $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s unless care is taken in the selection of the soil and compaction procedures.

The leakage through a single CL is linearly proportional to k_L ; however, this is not the case for composite liners where the GM is in direct contact with the CL. In this case, it is the interface transmissivity rather than the hydraulic conductivity of the CL that controls leakage.

The reported GM/GCL interface transmissivity for a reinforced GCL (needle-punched and stitch-bonded) may vary between a high of 2×10^{-10} m²/s and a low of 6×10^{-12} m²/s with an average of about 4×10^{-11} m²/s for all the reinforced GCL data and about 2×10^{-11} m²/s for all the GCLs containing sodium bentonite at 50 kPa. Although higher stress may give slightly lower transmissivity, there was no strong trend. Likewise the geotextile in contact with the GM and the hydraulic conductivity of the GCL had very little effect on the interface transmissivity. Based on presently available data, a typical design transmissivity for a GM/CCL assuming good construction practice appears to be about 2×10^{-8} m²/s.

Although wrinkles can be avoided, this is expensive and is not typical outside of Germany. New calculations presented in this paper further illustrate the point raised by Rowe (2005) that calculations of leakage for composite liners assuming direct contact (i.e., no linear features like wrinkles) between the GM and the CL significantly underestimate (i.e., by one or more orders of magnitude) the actual leakage in typical North American landfills.

The Rowe (1998) equation for leakage through wrinkles (Eq. 6) can explain the observed leakage in North American landfills for heads and connected wrinkle lengths typical of that observed in landfills during construction.

Based on the presently available data, it can be concluded that although wrinkles may reach heights of 0.2 m or more and widths up to 0.5 m on occasion, for 1.5 mm thick HDPE GM (smooth or textured), at least during the typical eastern Canadian construction season, wrinkles were typically about 0.06 m high and about ($2b =$) 0.2 m to 0.3 m wide. The average width did not change significantly over most of the day. The length of connected wrinkles varied substantially with the time of day and to some extent with the size of the unconstrained area. If the GM were

covered with the leachate collection layer before 8:00am or after 4:00 pm, there would have been about 6 to 7 connected wrinkles per hectare with connected length $L \leq 200$ m. This length would increase with the time of day the GM was covered, typically peaking at around 1:00 pm with an connected length of about 2,000 m for an unrestrained area of up to about 0.2 ha (and larger for larger unrestrained areas).

It would appear that at low heads, connected wrinkle lengths (with a hole) of $85 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 700 \text{ m}$ and at higher heads $400 \text{ m} \leq L \leq 700 \text{ m}$ most likely explain the leakages typically observed through a primary composite liner in double lined landfills in North America. These lengths are consistent with what one would expect based on the field studies reported by Chappel et al. (2011) and Rowe *et al.* (2011b) if the GM was covered when the area of the base with wrinkles was between about 3% and 15%.

Allowing for typical wrinkles, the leakage through composite liners can still be very small compared to a single GM or CL alone for a landfill application ($h_w = 0.3$ m). For a GCL with $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s below the wrinkle and $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s outside the wrinkle, the calculated leakage is less than about 14 lphd for $L \leq 200$ m and less than 50 lphd for $L \leq 700$ m. For a 0.6 m thick CCL ($k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s), the corresponding calculated leakages were less than about 83 lphd for $L \leq 200$ m and less than 580 lphd for $L \leq 700$ m.

For leachate lagoons where interaction between the GCL and leachate is a significant concern (i.e., where $k_L \sim 2 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s might be anticipated in some cases), the use of a composite liner with a GCL and CCL together can result in a substantial reduction in leakage provided that there is sufficient ballast above the GM to ensure composite liner action (e.g., to avoid GM uplift from the underlying CL). Here the GCL serves to restrict the lateral migration of leachate between the GM and the GCL due to its good interface transmissivity while the thickness of the CCL controls the leakage in the zones beneath the wrinkle and out to where leachate can migrate between the GM and GCL. For this case ($h_w = 5$ m) the leakage was 65 lphd for $L = 200$ m and 220 lphd for $L = 700$ m. Designers should be wary of the effectiveness of composite liner action when the GM is exposed and there is potential for the GM to lift (even very slightly) from the underlying CL; in these cases a leakage control layer and secondary liner may be required to control leakage.

To ensure good composite liner action, it is important that: (a) CCLs below the GM not be allowed to desiccate (even desiccation of the upper few centimetres of liner will substantially increase the GM/CCL interface transmissivity and hence leakage), and (b) GCL panels not be

allowed to shrink to the point where overlap integrity is lost. The best way of protecting the integrity of both the CCL and GCL is to cover the composite liner with the drainage or other soil protective layer quickly after placement of the GM. CCLs can significantly desiccate after only a few hours of exposure given that GM temperatures can easily reach 50 to 70°C on a sunny day. GCL panel separation is not as urgent a problem as CCL desiccation but panel separation can occur in less than two months in some situations while in other circumstances the composite liner can be exposed for up to five years without separation. These differences are likely a result of a combination of the factors discussed in this paper. The shrinkage strain required to cause the loss of 150 to 300 mm of panel overlap could be mobilized in about 5 wet-dry cycles of the magnitude examined in several studies discussed in this paper.

The potential for loss of GCL panel overlap can be minimized by placing panels with 300 mm of overlap and then placing the drainage layer (or other cover soil) as quickly as possible after placement of the GM over the GCL as noted above. In cases where this may not be practical, other options include: (a) using a GCL that has demonstrated relatively low shrinkage in the field, and/or (b) mechanically bonding the overlaps (e.g., by sewing or heat tacking). However, while both these latter approaches may substantially reduce the risk of panel separation, there is no assurance that they will prevent panel separation under worst case conditions; the best solution is to cover the composite liner quickly.

Heat generated in a landfill may result in landfill liner temperatures of 30 to 40°C for “normal” MSW landfills. Substantially higher liner temperatures (50 to 60°C) have been observed for cases where there has been significant moisture augmentation. Although there are no explicit liner temperature measurements, waste temperatures of 60 to 80°C at locations only a few metres above the liner have been observed in some unusual MSW landfills with leachate temperatures of 50 to 60°C. For ashfills, temperatures of 50 to 90°C have been observed 3 m above the liner and leachate temperatures of 65 to 70°C have been recorded. Landfills containing reactive wastes, such as aluminum production wastes, have been observed to generate waste temperatures in the landfill in excess of 143°C.

CCLs are particularly prone to desiccation, especially when compacted near (or above) the plastic limit as is often done to achieve a low hydraulic conductivity. Desiccation may occur: (a) after construction of the clay liner and before placing the drainage layer or geomembrane; (b) after placing the geomembrane and before covering with the drainage layer; and/or (c) after placement of

waste. In the first two cases the heat is generated by the sun, while in the last case the heat is generated by the waste.

There is also potential for desiccation of GCLs even at traditional MSW landfill liner temperatures (35 to 40°C) under conditions of low stress and where the foundation soil has low initial moisture content. As the liner temperature increases, the risk of desiccation increases and thus special care is required for waste that can generate heat in excess of about 35 to 40°C on the liner (e.g., MSW incinerator ash containing aluminum, reactive waste, and when aggressively operating a MSW landfill as a bioreactor).

The presently available data suggest that for landfill liners with maximum temperatures of 30 to 40°C, the service life of a 1.5 mm HDPE GM with a good resin and antioxidant package may be very long (thousands of years). However, the same data suggests that for liners subjected to temperatures of 60°C the service life can be reduced to decades (and even less at higher temperatures).

It is important to consider the effects of the temperature-time history on both the primary and secondary composite liners when designing MSW landfills. This includes consideration of the effect of temperature on desiccation of clay liners (both CCL and GCL) and on the service life of the GMs. Recent research has highlighted the need for long-term monitoring of landfill liner temperature and the need for long-term GM ageing studies that will provide improved data for assessing the likely long-term performance of GMs in MSW landfills.

For applications where the estimated GM or GCL service life based on the primary liner temperature that may reasonably be expected is not sufficient, options include: (a) changing the barrier system design (e.g., thickening the primary liner) and/or the choice of materials (e.g., some GMs will have a much longer service life than others); (b) changing the method of landfill operation so as to reduce heat generation (e.g., avoiding reactive wastes, not operating as a bioreactor, etc.); (c) cooling the primary liner; or (d) cooling the secondary liner.

To minimize leakage through composite liners, it would appear that future design guidelines need to pay more attention to issues such as: (a) wrinkles in GMs; (b) the hydraulic conductivity of GCLs used in low stress applications (e.g., leachate lagoons) where there are wrinkles and potential for interaction with leachate; (c) selection of the best GCL for a given application (they are not all the same); (d) the temperatures to which the liner may be subjected during its design life; (e) potential for desiccation of clay liners when the waste or fluid to be contained will be at

temperatures of 35°C or higher; and (f) tensile strains in the GM. Also, installation guidelines and construction specifications need to pay more attention to issues such as: (a) when to cover GMs to control wrinkles to an acceptable level; (b) avoiding desiccation of CCLs before they are covered with a GM; (c) covering the GM above a CCL quickly so that it does not desiccate when the GM is exposed to the sun; (d) the moisture content of the subgrade upon which a GCL is placed; (e) placing GCLs with a 300 mm overlap or mechanically bonding the panels; and (f) covering the composite liner as quickly as practicable (the longer it is exposed to the sun the greater the potential problems that can arise).

Based on the available data, it can be concluded that composite liners have performed extremely well in field applications for a couple of decades. The recent reported and examined in this paper aids in understanding why they have worked so well, but also provides new insight into issues that need to be considered to ensure excellent long-term liner performance of composite liners—especially for applications where the liner temperature can exceed about 35°C.

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9 NOTATION

a	Area of a hole in GM (m^2 or mm^2)
A	Area of liner under consideration (m^2)
AL	Attenuation layer (typically $k \leq 10^{-7}$ m/s)
b	Half-width of a wrinkle (m)
C_B	Coefficient related to the shape of the edges of the hole in GM (-)
CL	Clay liner (either CCL or GCL)
CCL	Compacted clay liner
CEC	Cation exchange capacity
CQA/CQC	Construction quality assurance/construction quality control
GCL	Geosynthetic clay liner
GM	Geomembrane
GTX	Geotextile
g	Acceleration due to gravity (m/s^2)
h_a	Height of potentiometric surface above aquifer (m)
H_A	Thickness of attenuation layer (m)
H_L	Thickness of clay liner (m)
h_w	Leachate head on liner (m)
i	Hydraulic gradient (-)
i_s	Hydraulic gradient across CL and AL (-)
HDPE	High density polyethylene
k	Hydraulic conductivity/permeability (m/s)
k_A	Hydraulic conductivity of AL (m/s)
k_L	Hydraulic conductivity of clay liner (m/s)
k_s	Harmonic mean hydraulic conductivity of CL and AL (m/s)
L	Length of connected wrinkle (m)
lphd	Litres per hectare per day
LDS	Leak detection system
MSW	Municipal solid waste
M_A	Mass per unit area of GCL (g/m^2)
N	Nonwoven geotextile
Q	Leakage (m^3/s or lphd)
QUELTS	Queen's University Environmental Liner Test Site
r_o	Radius of a hole in a GM (m)
S	Smooth GM
SB	Stitch-bonded
SI	Swell index
TDS	Textured GM
TEH	Spayed-on textured GM
TSO	Embossed honeycomb textured GM
W	Woven geotextile
θ	GM/CL interface transmissivity (m^2/s)

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Table 1 Reported size of holes in GMs (based on data reported by Colucci and Lavagnolo (1995)).

Leak Area (mm ²)	Equivalent Radius of circular hole, r_o (mm)	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
0-20	0-2.5	23.2	23.2
20-100	2.5-5.64	26.3	49.5
100-500	5.64-12.6	28.2	77.7
500-10 ³	12.6-17.8	8.8	86.5
10 ³ -10 ⁴	17.8-56.4	7.8	94.3
10 ⁴ -10 ⁵	56.4-178	4.5	98.2
10 ⁵ -10 ⁶	178-517	1.2	100

Table 2 Calculated leakages through a GM liner (all calculated leakages are rounded to two significant digits)

Number of holes/ha			2.5	5
h_w (m)	r_o (mm)	a (mm ²)	Q (lphd)	Q (lphd)
0.3	0.5	0.79	250	500
0.3	1	3.14	1,000	2,000
0.3	5.64	100	32,000	63,000
5	0.5	0.79	1,000	2,000
5	1	3.14	4,000	8,000
5	5.64	100	130,000	260,000

Table 3 Calculated leakage through a single primary clay liner for typical design hydraulic conductivity (GCL $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s, $H_L = 0.01$ m; CCL $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s, $H_L = 0.6$ m). Refer to Figures 4 and 5.

h_w		0.3 m		5 m
Liner	H_A (m)	h_a (m)	Q (lphd)	Q (lphd)
GCL	0	0	1,300	22,000
CCL	0	0	1,300	8,000
GCL	0.59	0	3,800	23,000
GCL	3.74	3	3,800	21,000
CCL	3.15	3	1,400	7,900

Table 4 Calculated leakage through a single primary clay liner for upper bound hydraulic conductivity (GCL $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s, $H_L = 0.01$ m; CCL $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s, $H_L = 0.6$ m). Refer to Figures 4 and 5.

h_w		0.3 m		5 m
Liner	H_A (m)	h_a (m)	Q (lphd)	Q (lphd)
GCL	0	0	5,400	87,000
CCL	0	0	13,000	81,000
GCL	0.59	0	14,000	87,000
GCL	3.74	3	10,000	57,000
CCL	3.15	3	9,900	54,000

Table 5 Calculated leakage through a single primary clay liner for lower bound hydraulic conductivity (GCL $k_L = 7 \times 10^{-12}$ m/s, $H_L = 0.01$ m; CCL $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s, $H_L = 0.6$ m). Refer to Figures 4 and 5.

h_w		0.3 m		5 m
Liner	H_A (m)	h_a (m)	Q (lphd)	Q (lphd)
GCL	0	0	190	3,000
CCL	0	0	130	810
GCL	0.59	0	540	3,400
GCL	3.74	3	620	3,400
CCL	3.15	3	150	820

Table 6 Published GM/GCL interface transmissivities (GCLs needle-punched and containing sodium bentonite unless otherwise noted)

GM/GCL Contact	θ at 7 kPa (m ² /s)	θ at 50 kPa (m ² /s)	θ at 70 kPa (m ² /s)
S-Bentonite ¹	2x10 ⁻¹²		2x10 ⁻¹²
S-W-B ¹	3x10 ⁻¹¹		9x10 ⁻¹²
S-W-C ¹	8x10 ⁻¹¹		6x10 ⁻¹²
S-W-D ¹	2x10 ⁻¹⁰		1x10 ⁻¹⁰
S-N-E ¹	1x10 ⁻¹⁰		8x10 ⁻¹¹
S-N-F ²		2.2x10 ⁻¹¹	
TSO-N-F ²		3.7x10 ⁻¹¹	
TEH-N-F ²		1.4x10 ⁻¹¹	
TDS-N-F ²		1.8x10 ⁻¹¹	
S-N-G ³		1.1x10 ⁻¹¹	
S-N-H ⁴		2.4x10 ⁻¹¹	
S-N-H ⁴		2.1x10 ⁻¹¹	
S-W-SB ⁴		2.6x10 ⁻¹¹	
S-W-SB ⁴		1.9x10 ⁻¹¹	
S-N-CB1 ⁴		3.0x10 ⁻¹¹	
S-W-CB2 ⁴		2.8x10 ⁻¹¹	
S-W-CB2 ⁴		2.7x10 ⁻¹¹	

Bentonite = bentonite glued to a plastic carrier layer with bentonite in direct contact with the GM.

S = Smooth GM; TDS = Textured GM; TSO = Textured GM with “sprayed-on” texture; TEH = Textured GM with “embossed honeycomb” texture;

W = woven geotextile in contact with GM; N = nonwoven geotextile in contact with GM;

-B, indicates GCL product B, etc.

SB indicates the product is stitch-bonded;

GCL-F: $k_L = 3.7 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s at 50 kPa, $M_A = 5000$ g/m²;

GCL-H: $k_L = 1.6 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s at 50 kPa, $M_A = 7400$ g/m²;

GCL-SB: $k_L = 3.2 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s at 50 kPa, $M_A = 5410$ g/m²;

GCL-CB1: calcium bentonite and $k_L = 5.8 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s at 50 kPa, $M_A = 5730$ g/m²;

GCL-CB2: calcium bentonite and $k_L = 6.9 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s at 50 kPa, $M_A = 10590$ g/m²;

¹ Harpur *et al.* (1993); ² Barroso *et al.* (2008);

³ Barroso *et al.* (2010); ⁴ Mendes *et al.* (2010).

Table 7 Leakage through a hole in a GM for composite liner with GCL and AL: $H_L = 0.01$ m, $H_A = 0.6$ m, $h_a = 0$ m, large hole: $r_o = 5.64$ mm, $a = 100$ mm²

Holes/ha			2.5	5
k_L (m/s)	θ (m ² /s)	h_w (m)	Q (lphd)	Q (lphd)
2×10^{-10}	6×10^{-12}	0.3	0.003	0.006
		5.0	0.033	0.066
2×10^{-10}	2×10^{-10}	0.3	0.04	0.08
		5.0	0.47	0.94
7×10^{-12}	1×10^{-10}	0.3	0.01	0.02
		5.0	0.17	0.34
2×10^{-10}	1×10^{-10}	0.3	0.02	0.04
		5.0	0.27	0.54
2×10^{-8}	1×10^{-10}	0.3	0.09	0.18
		5.0	0.85	1.7

Table 8 Leakage through a hole in a GM for composite liner with CCL: $H_L = 0.6$ m, $h_a = 0$ m, $k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s, good contact: $\theta = 1.6 \times 10^{-8}$ m²/s

Hole Radius Area	Small 1 mm 3.14 mm ²		Large 5.64 mm 100 mm ²	
	2.5	5	2.5	5
Holes/ha	h_w (m)	Q (lphd)	Q (lphd)	Q (lphd)
	0.3	1.0	2.0	1.3
	5.0	14	26	18
				2.6
				36

Table 9 Comparison between observed and calculated leakage (direct contact solution) during the active period for 0.9 m thick CCL and 0.01 m thick GCL in a primary liner over a geonet leak detection system

Liner	k_L (m/s)	θ (m ² /s)	Calculated ¹	Observed ²	
				Range ³	Peak ⁴
CCL	1x10 ⁻¹⁰	1.6x10 ⁻⁸	6	60-160 ⁵	390 ⁵
CCL	1x10 ⁻⁹	1x10 ⁻⁷	40		
GCL	5x10 ⁻¹¹	2x10 ⁻¹²	0.001	0-11	54
GCL	2x10 ⁻¹⁰	2x10 ⁻¹⁰	0.06		

¹ Hole $r_o = 5.6$ mm; $h_w = 0.3$ m, $h_a = 0$ m; $H_A = 0$ m, 5 holes/ha; calculations rounded to one significant figure;

² Bonaparte *et al.* (2002);

³ Weighted average flow based on data from Bonaparte *et al.* (2002);

⁴ Maximum peak flow;

⁵ Specifically for 0.9 m CCL in Table 4 of Rowe (2005). Note that leakages up to almost 2,000 lphd have been reported for other composite liners with a CCL.

Table 10 Calculated¹ connected wrinkle length (with a hole) per hectare to explain observed target leakage for the assumed parameters

Observed target:		Range ³	Peak ⁴
h_w (m)		0.05	0.3
k_L (m/s)	θ (m ² /s)	L (m)	L (m)
CCL	Target ² Q (lphd)	60-160 ⁵	390 ⁵
1×10^{-10}	1.6×10^{-8}	270-730	1400
5×10^{-10}	1.6×10^{-8}	120-380	620
1×10^{-9}	1.6×10^{-8}	85-230	440
1×10^{-9}	1.0×10^{-7}	35-90	180
GCL	Target ² Q (lphd)	0-11	54
5×10^{-11}	2×10^{-12}	0-1800	1700
5×10^{-11}	2×10^{-11}	0-1300	1200
1×10^{-10}	2×10^{-11}	0-740	700
2×10^{-10}	2×10^{-11}	0-400	390
2×10^{-10}	2×10^{-10}	0-270	250

¹ Using Eq. 6 and geometry as per schematics in Figure 6 and Figure 10 with $H_A = 0$ m, $h_a = 0$ m, $2b = 0.2$ m, hole $r_o = 5.6$ mm; CCL $H_L = 0.6$ m, GCL $H_L = 0.01$ m. Calculated numbers have been rounded to two significant digits;

² Bonaparte *et al.* (2002);

³ Weighted average flow based on data from Bonaparte *et al.* (2002);

⁴ Maximum peak flow;

⁵ Specifically for 0.9 m CCL in Table 4 of Rowe (2005); leakages up to almost 2,000 lphd have been reported for other composite liners with a CCL.

Table 11 Calculated^a leakage, Q , through selected composite liners for a hole in one connected wrinkle of length L per hectare for $h_w = 0.3$ m

Case	k_L (m/s)	θ (m ² /s)	100	200	700
			Q (lphd)		
0.6m CCL	5×10^{-10}	1.6×10^{-8}	58	120	410
$H_A = 0$ m ^b	1×10^{-9}	1.6×10^{-8}	83	170	580
0.01m GCL	5×10^{-11}	2×10^{-11}	3	6	21
$H_A = 0$ m	2×10^{-10}	2×10^{-11}	9	17	61
	*	2×10^{-11}	7	14	49
0.6 m CCL	5×10^{-10}	1.6×10^{-8}	67	130	470
$H_A = 3.15$ m ^c	1×10^{-9}	1.6×10^{-8}	94	190	660
.01m GCL	5×10^{-11}	2×10^{-11}	10	20	63
$H_A = 3.74$ m ^c	2×10^{-10}	2×10^{-11}	29	59	210
	*	2×10^{-11}	16	31	110

^a Using Eq. 6 and geometry as per schematic in Figure 10 with $2b = 0.1$ m, hole $r_o = 5.6$ mm; calculated leakages have been rounded to two significant digits;

^b $h_a = 0$ m;

^c $h_a = 3$ m, $H_A + H_L = 3.75$ m;

* Assuming $k_L = 2 \times 10^{-10}$ m/s below wrinkle and $k_L = 5 \times 10^{-11}$ m/s outside wrinkle.

Table 12 Calculated^a leakage, Q , through selected composite liners for a hole in an connected wrinkle of length L for $h_w = 5$ m

Case	k_L (m/s)	θ (m ² /s)	100	200	700
				Q (lphd)	
CCL ^b	1×10^{-9}	1.6×10^{-8}	510	100	3,600
	1×10^{-8}	1.0×10^{-7}	4,100	8,200	> 24,000
GCL ^c	5×10^{-11}	2×10^{-11}	70	140	490
	2×10^{-10}	2×10^{-11}	230	450	1600
	2×10^{-8}	2×10^{-11}	18,000	36,000	> 100,000
CCL ^d	1×10^{-9}	1.6×10^{-8}	510	1000	3,600
	1×10^{-8}	1.0×10^{-7}	3,400	6,800	> 24,000
GCL ^e	5×10^{-11}	2×10^{-11}	70	140	490
	2×10^{-10}	2×10^{-11}	160	320	1,100
	2×10^{-8}	2×10^{-11}	330	670	2,300
GC/CC ^f	2×10^{-8}	2×10^{-11}	32	63	220

^a Using Eq. 6 and geometry as per schematic in Figure 10 with $2b = 0.2$ m, hole $r_o = 5.6$ mm; calculated leakages have been rounded to two significant digits;

^b $h_a = 0$ m, $H_L = 0.6$ m;

^c $h_a = 0$ m, $H_L = 0.01$ m;

^d $h_a = 3$ m, $H_L = 0.6$ m; $H_A + H_L = 3.75$ m;

^e $h_a = 3$ m, $H_L = 0.01$ m; $H_A + H_L = 3.75$ m;

^f 0.01 m GCL ($k_L = 2 \times 10^{-8}$ m/s) + 0.6m CCL ($k_L = 1 \times 10^{-9}$ m/s) + 3.14 m AL ($k = 1 \times 10^{-7}$ m/s);

Table 13 Summary of reported GCL panel separation (gap). Note GCLs were to have been initially overlapped by 150mm and hence shrinkage is 150mm greater than the gap indicated below) (data based on Koerner and Koerner 2005b and Thiel *et al.* 2006).

GCL ¹	Slope	Maximum gap (mm)	Shrinkage ⁴ (%)	Exposure (months)
W/W ²	22°	300	10	60
N/W ³	18°	200	8	15
N/W ³	4°	300	10	2
N/N ³	34°	1200	31	36
N/N ³	18°	300	10	5
N/N ³	4°	450	14	2
N/N ³	2-4°	150	7	2

¹ Cover GTX/carrier GTX; W = woven GTX; N = nonwoven GTX; ²Unreinforced GCL; ³Reinforced GCL with an as-manufactured water content reported to be 20-44%. ⁴ Calculated for initial overlap of 150mm and roll width of 4.4m

Table 14 Temperature on (or near) liners for different environments

Environment	Temperatures (°C)	Reference
Normal MSW landfills (limited moisture addition)	30 - 40	Brune <i>et al.</i> (1991), Rowe (2005), Koerner and Koerner (2006), Needham and Knox (2008), Author's files
Wet landfills (e.g. bioreactor landfills) where there is a significant amount of moisture	40 - 60	Yoshida and Rowe (2003), Koerner <i>et al.</i> (2008), Author's files
Unusual MSW landfills ¹	60 - 80 ¹ 50 - 60 ²	Author's files
Ash monofills	46 50 - 90 ¹ 65 - 70 ²	Klein <i>et al.</i> , (2001) Author's files
MSW with aluminum production waste and leachate recirculation	85 ³ > 143 ⁴	Stark <i>et al.</i> (2011)
Nickel heap leach pad	70	Abdelaal <i>et al.</i> (2011)
Ponds for highly saline fluid	70 - 93	Lichtwardt and Comer (1997)

¹ No monitors on liner so liner temperature is unknown, temperature given is in waste about 3m above liner; ² Leachate temperature; ³ Temperature in leachate collection pipes; ⁴ Temperature in waste

Table 15 Estimated service life of a 1.5 mm to 2 mm HDPE GM based on two temperature-time histories (modified from Rowe and Islam 2009)

t_1 (year)	t_2 (year)	t_3 (year)	t_4 (year)	T_o (°C)	T_p (°C)	Estimated service life (years)
8	14	20	40	10	37	1900-3300
0	8	30	40	20	60	20-30

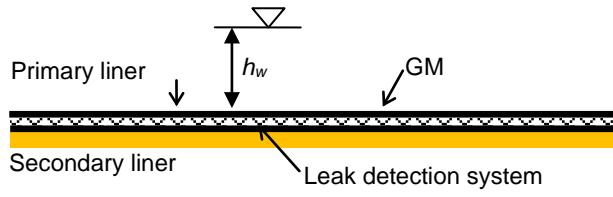


Figure 1 Single GM primary liner over a leak detection system



Figure 2 Desiccation cracking of CCL before the GM is placed



Figure 3 Compacted clay liner (forming part of a composite liner) that has desiccated (Photo courtesy of P. Davies).

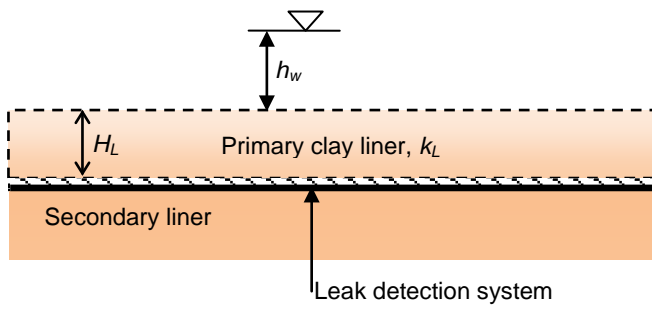


Figure 4 Single primary clay liner over a leak detection system

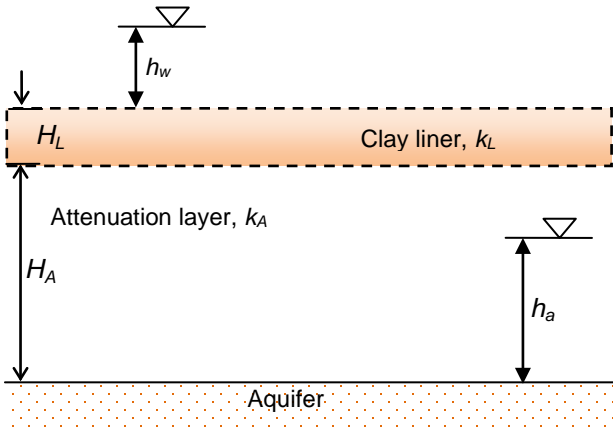


Figure 5 Clay liner over an attenuation layer and aquifer

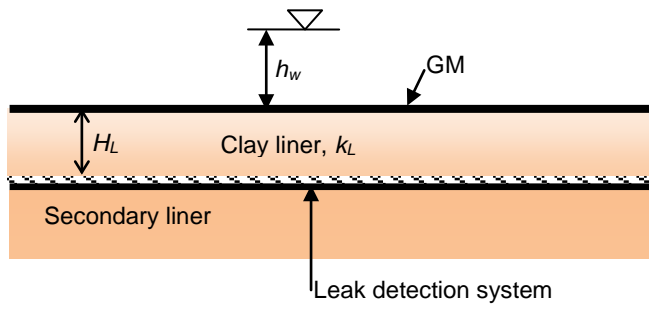


Figure 6 Primary composite liner over a leak detection system

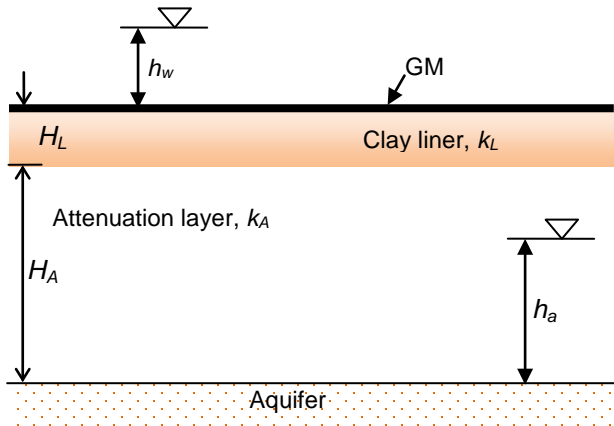


Figure 7 Single composite liner over an attenuation layer and aquifer (also depicts secondary composite liner in a double lined system)



Figure 8 Photo of a GM in direct contact with the underlying GCL liner at QUELTS at 7:00am on a cool October morning. Note: right-left distance from toe of slope to anchor trench is about 20m.

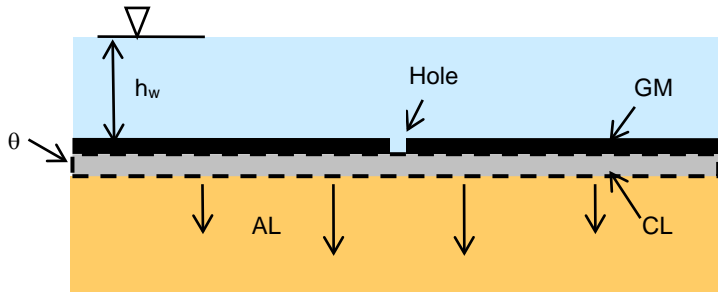


Figure 9 Schematic showing leakage, Q , through a hole in a GM over a CL

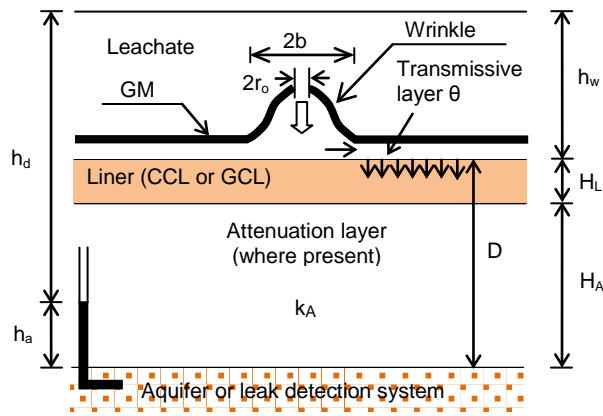


Figure 10 Schematic showing leakage through a wrinkle of length L and width $2b$ with a hole of radius r_o (adapted from Rowe 1998)

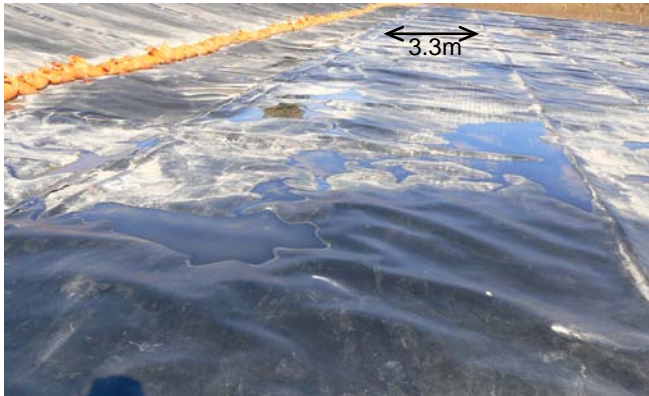


Figure 11 Photograph of wrinkles at QUELTS (same bottom liner as shown in Figure 8) on 23 March 2007 when ambient temperature is 9°C. Note longitudinal wrinkles at 3.3 m spacing are beginning to form. White patches are what remain of a sprinkling of snow on liner from the previous night. Water puddles from melting snow are constrained from flowing off the base (slope 3% from left to right—north to south) by the wrinkles.



Figure 12 Aerial photo showing a small portion of connected wrinkle network on the base liner at QUELTS (same bottom liner as shown in Figures 8 and 11) Taken on 28 May 2008 at 1:00pm; air temperature of 11°C; GM temperature on the base of 53°C. Distance between GM seams is approximately 6.7 m as shown. Modified from Rowe *et al.* (2011b).



Figure 13 Photo showing wrinkles (Photo courtesy of R. Thiel).

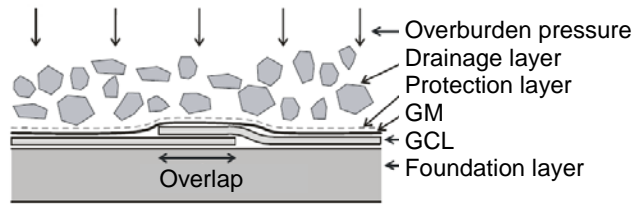


Figure 14 Schematic of a GCL panel overlap (adapted from Brachman *et al.* 2011)

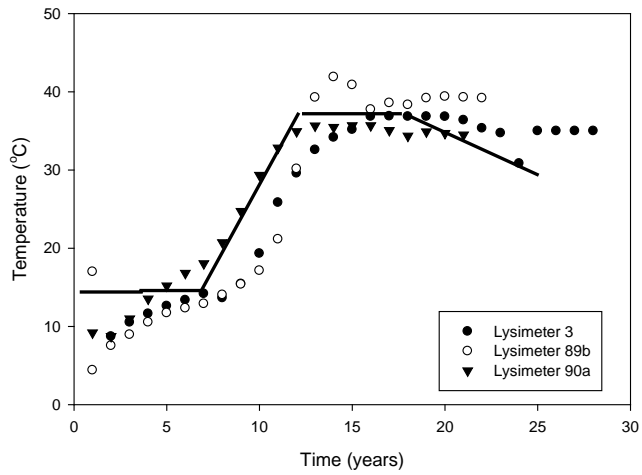


Figure 15 Most recent available data for liner temperatures at three locations at the Keele Valley Landfill, Toronto and the idealized temperature time history used by Rowe and Islam (2009) to generate the first case in Table 15 (Data courtesy of the City of Toronto and Golder Associates).

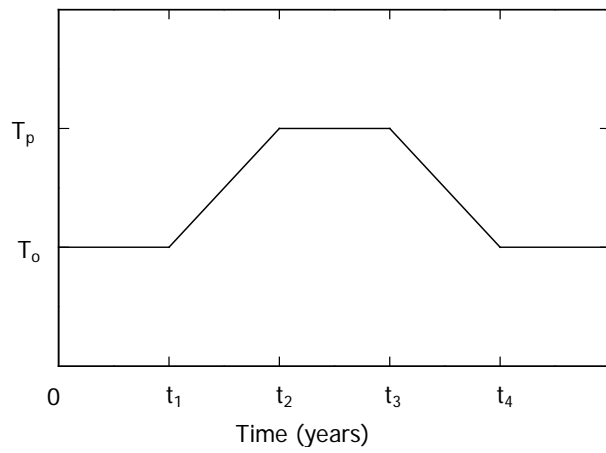


Figure 16 Schematic of a temperature-time history for a landfill liner; T_o is initial and final temperature; T_p is peak liner temperature (modified from Rowe and Islam 2009).