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Superfund Community Relations Plan

December 20, 1991

Eastern Michaud Flats Superfund Site Power County, Idaho

This Community Relations Plan describes how the public will be involved in the Superfund activities at the Eastern Michaud Flats (EMF) site in Power County, Idaho. This plan is designed to involve the public during the upcoming site investigation, and will be updated as needed.

EPA encourages community involvement. For those who would like to discuss the activities planned for this site, or have suggestions for additional activities, please call or write to:

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(206) 553-6686

Bill Adams
Project Manager
(206) 553-2806

1-800-424-4EPA

The plan is divided into the following sections:

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A. Overview of Superfund

In 1980, Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA), which was amended in 1986 by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA). These two laws are commonly known as Superfund.

Superfund gives the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to investigate and clean up releases, or threatened releases, of hazardous substances. The Superfund process is complex and can take many years to complete. On average, a site can stay on the National Priorities List (NPL) anywhere from six to ten years.

The Superfund process includes a detailed investigation at the site by taking soil, water, air and any waste samples. The samples are then studied and a range of possible cleanup strategies are evaluated. EPA evaluates the possible cleanup strategies using nine evaluation criteria, including public comment, and then chooses the best remedy.

The chosen remedy is then designed and constructed. Upon completion of the remedy, there is a requirement to operate, maintain or monitor the site for several years.

Throughout the process, the public has the right and opportunity to comment and become involved.

B. Site Description and Background

The Eastern Michaud Flats site includes the FMC and J.R. Simplot (Simplot) facilities, two phosphate ore processing plants. These facilities are located on Highway 30, west of Pocatello, Idaho. The Portneuf River is approximately one quarter mile to the northeast. Groundwater in the area provides water to at least 174 wells within three miles of the site. These wells are used for drinking water, irrigation and industrial purposes. The city of Pocatello has a public water supply well within three miles of the site.

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The FMC facility extracts elemental phosphorus from shale ore and stores the liquid phosphorus before being shipped for use at other facilities. This facility began operation in 1949 and produces approximately 250 million pounds of elemental phosphorus a year.

The FMC property contains approximately 13 on-site waste ponds, including precipitator slurry and phospy water ponds in the southwest part of the site, the calciner ponds along the east side of the property, and a cooling pond in the northeast section of the facility. The facility also has a solid waste landfill, and a large slag pile in the southern portion of the property.

The Simplot facility, located immediately east of FMC, produces a variety of fertilizer products from phosphate ore. This facility began operation in 1944 and produces concentrated phosphoric acid, triple super phosphate, ammonium phosphate and diammonium phosphate. In addition, non-contact cooling water from the facility is recovered and sold to farmers for irrigation purposes.

The Simplot facility contains a large gypsum stack, a gypsum decant pond, a cooling pond and three treatment ponds in the northeast portion of the site.

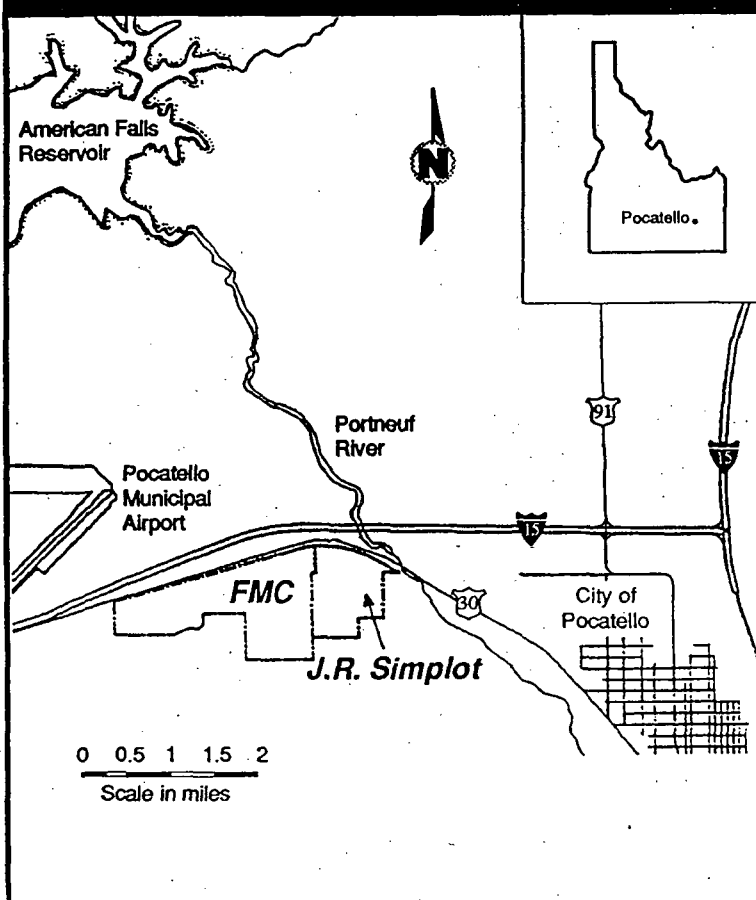
In 1976, the Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (IDHW) condemned a well at the Old Pilot House Cafe, due to high arsenic levels. The same year, FMC drilled a new deeper well for the restaurant. Contamination has not been found in the new well.

In September 1987, EPA collected soil, sediment, surface water, groundwater and waste samples. The results of those samples showed elevated levels of heavy metals in sediments of the waste water ponds at both facilities. The groundwater samples from company production and monitoring wells indicated that arsenic, cadmium, manganese and chloride were present at levels that exceeded EPA's drinking water standards. EPA listed the site on the Superfund National Priorities List in 1990 for further study and possible cleanup.

In 1990, FMC installed and sampled additional monitoring wells at the site. The results from this sampling program indicated that fluoride, lead, arsenic, nitrate and selenium were present in groundwater at levels that exceeded EPA drinking water standards.

Some of the major contaminants of concern that have been identified to date include arsenic, cadmium, chloride, chromium, copper, fluoride, lead, potassium, selenium, silica, sodium, vanadium and zinc.

Location Map: FMC/J.R. Simplot Sites



C. Community Background

▼ Community Profile

The Fort Hall Indian Reservation includes the Shoshone-Bannock tribes. There are approximately 5,114 people living on the 543,000 acre reservation.

Pocatello was officially established in 1892 after serving for at least two decades as an important crossroads of the Union Pacific Railroad line. Pocatello is the county seat for Bannock County, which was established in 1893. The population of Pocatello is 44,400.

The city of Chubbuck is immediately adjacent to Pocatello on the north side. The city has a mayor and city council. The population of Chubbuck is approximately 10,700.

Major industries in the Pocatello area are phosphorus mining and processing, agriculture, high-tech and nuclear research, the railroad and Idaho State University.

▼ Community Concerns

EPA distributed 21,000 copies of a fact sheet as a newspaper insert in the Idaho State Journal. The fact sheet contained a "coupon" that could be returned to receive future mailings and an option to include a phone number if a citizen wanted to meet with EPA representatives.

Community interviews were conducted during the week of November 4th. EPA interviewed city of Chubbuck and Pocatello officials, Power and Bannock County Commissioners, as well as federal officials, representatives of the Shoshone-Bannock tribes, FMC and Simplot officials, and concerned members of the community. Due to the level of interview requests, EPA was unable to personally meet with everyone. Therefore, additional interviews were conducted by telephone. A summary of the interviews is included below.

Superfund Process: Several citizens and officials expressed confusion about the Superfund process and the length of time that it would take for the RI/FS. Several questions that came up during the interviews are: What are the boundaries of the Eastern Michaud Flat site? What happens during the Superfund process? Who pays for the investigation and cleanup? FMC and Simplot officials expressed concern that their workers have limited knowledge about the Superfund process.

Portneuf River: The Portneuf River has become a concern to many people in the community. Over the years, the river has suffered from misuse. Citizens and officials said that the river has become polluted from sources other than FMC and Simplot. However, they are concerned about the quality of the water being discharged into the river by FMC. The tribe views the river as a fishery and is also concerned about the quality of water being discharged into the river.

American Falls Reservoir: A couple of citizens and one official expressed concern about the quality of water in the American Falls Reservoir and wanted to know if it will be tested when the investigation begins.

Groundwater: Several citizens wanted to know if contamination was threatening any nearby wells. One citizen said that several workers at the Simplot plant had complained of health problems when drinking the water. The tribe expressed concern about groundwater con-

tamination; however, because the closest well is approximately three miles away, they do not feel that it is an immediate threat.

Air Quality: Many citizens and the tribe expressed concern about the air quality. Two citizens mentioned that they thought the companies increased their air emissions at night. A couple of citizens felt that their health had been impacted by the air emissions from the site. Another citizen commented that the sulfur odor in the summer prevents them from opening windows. One official expressed concern about the sulfuric acid in the air and the fugitive dust from the gypsum pile at the Simplot facility.

Jobs: One citizen said that many workers at the FMC facility are concerned about their jobs. One city official felt that the companies have been "good neighbors" and expressed concern that jobs may be lost due to the Superfund process. The tribe also expressed concern about loss of jobs.

Benefit to the Community: Several citizens and one official said that they thought other companies had not located in Pocatello because of the two facilities and the air problems. They felt that the Superfund process may be beneficial for the community because the companies will "need to clean up their acts" and other companies may be more likely to locate in Pocatello. Another citizen said that Superfund is a temporary benefit to the area because the companies will need to hire cleanup contractors. A couple of other citizens said that Superfund may hurt the economy of the community in the short term, but will benefit in the long term.

Irrigation Water: Several citizens wanted to know if the irrigation water that Simplot sells to the farmers is tested on a regular basis. They also wanted to know if the water was okay for their children and animals to play in, and if the irrigation water could contaminate the groundwater in the area. One citizen expressed concern about the irrigation pipe that is buried in their yard.

Wildlife: Many citizens expressed concern about the wildlife near the site, such as the waterfowl and raptors. A couple of people mentioned that studies are being done to determine concentration levels of various chemicals in animals.

Health Effects: Several citizens and officials expressed concern about impacts from the companies on people's health. Several citizens were particularly concerned about the health of their children. Two citizens expressed concern about the health of the workers at the

companies. One official wanted to know if the cancer rate is higher in Pocatello than other parts of the county. The tribe expressed health concerns particularly over the air emissions. A couple of people mentioned instances where they felt that their health had been impacted by the companies air emissions, such as skin irritation and breathing difficulties.

EPA Credibility: Most officials expressed concern that the recent Slag issue had hurt EPA's credibility. Several officials said that most people in the Pocatello area do not like the federal government, and would prefer to be "left alone". Several citizens said that the federal government does not admit when they make mistakes, which hurts credibility.

Cooperation: One federal official expressed concern that a cooperative attitude be maintained between the companies and EPA.

More Community Involvement: Several citizens and officials expressed a desire for EPA to have a more active role in the community. They expressed a desire to have EPA representatives on local television talk shows, speak at various functions, such as schools in the area. One citizen felt that EPA should be more active in the community which would help EPA's credibility.

Other Programs at EPA: A couple of citizens expressed interest in other programs at EPA, such as programs that may prevent sites from becoming Superfund sites.

Appreciation Expressed: Several citizens said that they appreciated EPA representatives taking the time to hear their concerns about the site.

How to Distribute Information: Most of the citizens and officials said that the best way for EPA to communicate to the public was through fact sheets. However, several said that because the site was very visible, people may be interested in attending meetings and workshops. Others said that public meetings should be used only when important information is released. Many people expressed support for the media, but also said that the media has a tendency to be "one-sided" and lean towards covering industries side of things. FMC and Simplot officials expressed concern about the accuracy of the media.

Simplot unfairly put on Superfund list: One citizen expressed concern that the Simplot facility was put on the Superfund NPL because of its close proximity to FMC.

D. Objectives of the Community Relations Program

The Community Relations Program provides citizens with an opportunity to be informed about Superfund sites. Communication and input from the affected community is crucial to the program and effects the cleanup remedy for the site.

Objective 1: Give citizens the opportunity to comment on and be involved in technical decisions. Encourage and assist local citizens in providing input to agency decisions that will have long term effects on their community.

Objective 2: Inform the public of planned and ongoing activities.

Objective 3: Respond to questions, concerns and conflicts as they occur.

Listed below are some of the activities that EPA may use to keep the community informed and involved in the activities at the site. The level of community interest will be closely monitored and activities will be conducted as appropriate. This list can be updated at any time and EPA welcomes additional suggestions from community members.

Fact Sheets

Fact sheets and other information materials summarizing activities and technical documents and reports at the site will be mailed to EPA's mailing list throughout the Superfund process.

Information Repository

The purpose of an information repository is to make information available for public review. All technical documents and reports will be placed in the repositories.

Technical Assistance Grants

Provide information on Technical Assistance Grants (TAG) to all interested parties. A TAG can provide funds to citizen groups affected by Superfund. The grant money can be used to hire a technical advisor to help interpret and understand technical materials produced as part of the Superfund process. Grants up to \$50,000 are available for the life of the project, and require a local share contribution of 20% of the total program cost. To receive more information, please call Dwight Davis at (206) 552-0603 or 1-800-424-4EPA.

Workshops

Informal workshops will be conducted throughout the Superfund process. Possible topics are: The Superfund Process, Sampling Techniques, Potential Health and Environmental Risks associated with the site, and clean-up alternatives.

Public Meetings

Public Meetings will be used to provide updated information at significant points in the Superfund process and during public comment period(s) to solicit public input. All public meetings will be announced in future fact sheets and notices in the Idaho State Journal and the Sho-Ban News.

E. Tentative Schedule of Community Involvement Activities

The following community involvement activities are those designed to allow on-going communication between the community and EPA and address the community concerns expressed above.

These activities and the accompanying schedule are subject to change. If changes occur, the public will be notified.

Start of Investigation Spring, 1992

- Establish information repositories at Idaho State University Library and the Ft. Hall Indian Reservation Library.
- Establish a site mail list to be updated on a regular basis.
- Prepare a fact sheet describing site, contamination problems and expected schedule of events.

During Investigation Spring 1992 - Fall 1993

- Prepare and distribute fact sheets on site activities.
- Brief public officials and press as needed.

End of Investigation Winter 1994 - Spring 1994

- Hold public comment period of at least 30 days to solicit comments on the RI/FS reports and the proposed plan.
- Hold a public meeting on the proposed plan and other cleanup alternatives.
- Prepare and distribute a Proposed Plan, which describes the investigation results, possible cleanup alternatives, risk assessment for the site and the agency's preferred cleanup alternative.
- Publish a public notice in the Idaho State Journal and the Sho-Ban News about the availability of the Proposed Plan and associated documents, the public comment period and the public meeting location.
- Provide briefing to local officials or press, as needed.

After Public Comment Period on Proposed Investigation Summer 1994

- Prepare a summary of public comments and EPA's responses to those comments in a document called a Responsibeness Summary.
- Select a final cleanup remedy and write a Record of Decision outlining the agency decision. The Responsiveness Summary will be attached to the ROD.
- Place an advertisement in the local papers announcing the final cleanup decision.
- Update the Community Relations Plan.

APPENDIX A: Key Contacts

Local Officials:

Peter Angstadt (208) 233-9080
 Mayor of Pocatello
 P.O. Box 4169
 902 E. Sherman
 Pocatello, ID 83205

John Cotant (208) 237-2400
 Mayor of Chubbuck
 P.O. Box 5604
 5160 Yellowstone Drive
 Chubbuck, ID 83202

Power County Commissioners (208) 226-7611
 Ralph Wheeler, Chairperson
 2848 Mayor Road
 American Falls, ID 83211

Bannock County Commissioners (208) 237-7210
 Tom Katsilometes, Chairperson
 Box 4016
 624 E. Center
 Pocatello, ID 83205

District #6 County Health Department
 (208) 233-9080
 Mark Lowe, Environmental Health Supervisor
 465 Memorial Drive
 Pocatello, ID 83202

Shoshone-Bannock Tribe:

Roger Turner (208) 237-9736
 Ft. Hall Indian Reservation
 P.O. box 306
 Ft. Hall, IO 83203

State Officials:

Boyd Roberts (208) 236-6160
 Gordon Brown
 Idaho Department of Welfare and Health
 Eastern Regional Office
 Division of Environmental Quality
 224 S. Arthur
 Pocatello, ID 83204

Federal Officials:

Krista Rave (206) 553-6686
 EPA Seattle Office or 1-800-424-4372
 1200 Sixth Avenue (HW-117)
 Seattle, WA 98101

Bill Adams (206) 553-2806
 EPA Seattle Office or 1-800-424-4372
 1200 Sixth Avenue (HW-117)
 Seattle, WA 98101

Mark Masarik (208) 334-1450
 EPA Idaho Operations Office

Senator Symms (208) 236-6775
 Senator Craig
 250 S. 4th Avenue
 207 Federal Building
 Pocatello, ID 83201

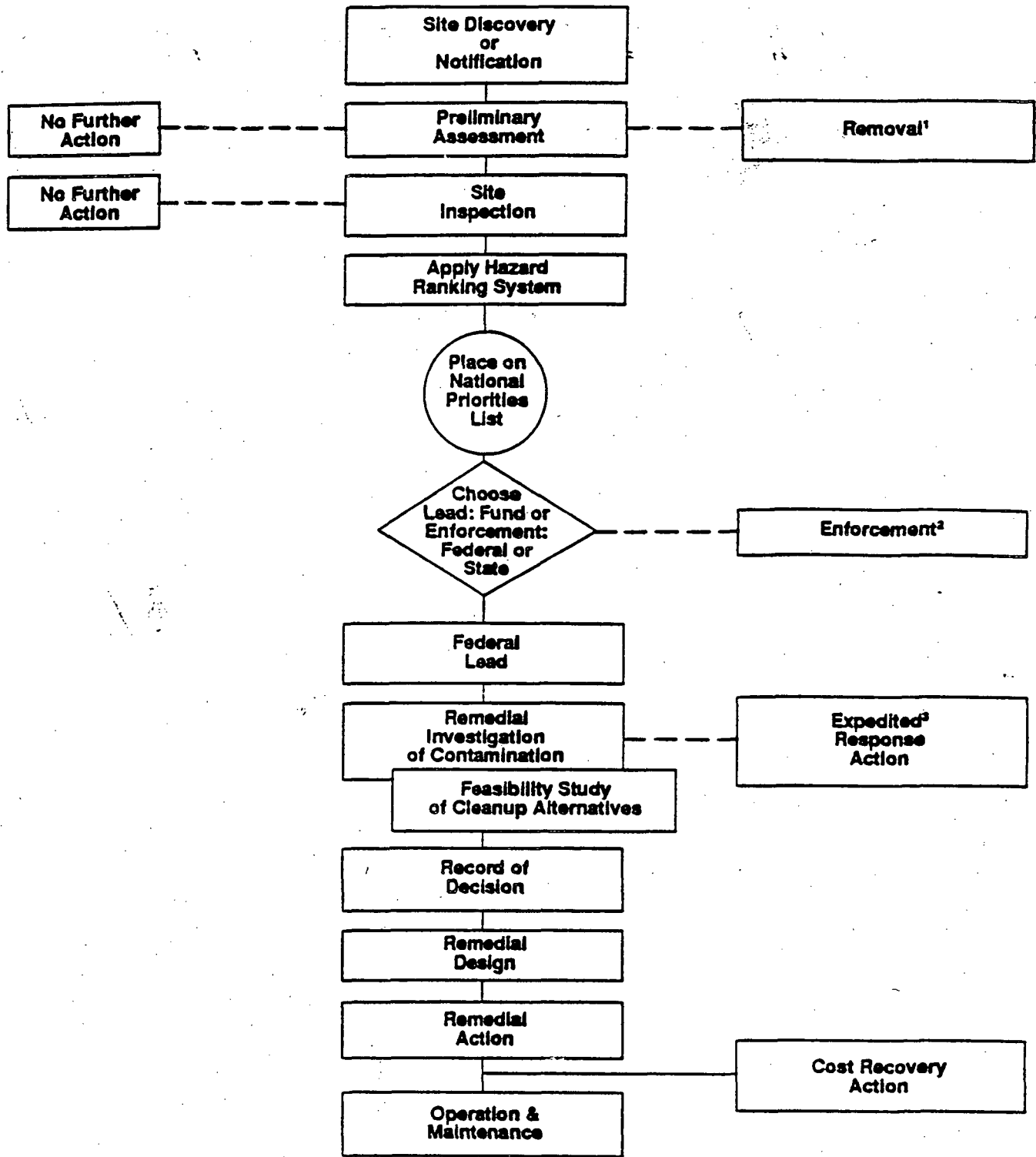
Representative Stallings (208) 236-6734
 250 S. 4th Avenue
 Room 220
 207 Federal Building
 Pocatello, ID 83201

Location of Information Repositories:

Idaho State University Library (208) 236-3045
 Document Department
 P.O. Box 8089
 Pocatello, ID 83209

Shoshone-Bannock Tribe Library (208) 238-3882
 Ft. Hall Indian Reservation
 P.O. Box 306
 Ft. Hall, ID 83203

Superfund Remedial Response Process



¹Removals may occur at any point in the remedial process if the lead agency determines that there is a threat to human health or the environment.

²Where the responsible parties are known, efforts are made, to the extent practicable, to have them perform the response actions. Enforcement negotiations commonly occur just prior to the RI/VFS and again just prior to the RD/RA.

³Expedited Response Action (ERAs) are taken at NPL sites by the remedial program using removal program authorities. ERAs must comply with the policies, procedures, and regulations of the removal program. Like removals, ERAs may occur at any point during the remedial process.



Superfund Glossary

Aquifer: An underground rock formation composed of materials such as sand, soil, or gravel that can store and supply ground water to wells and springs. Most aquifers used in the United States are within a thousand feet of the earth's surface.

Cleanup: Actions taken to deal with a release or threatened release of hazardous substances that could affect public health and/or the environment. The term "cleanup" is often used broadly to describe various response actions or phases of remedial responses such as the remedial investigation/feasibility study.

Enforcement: EPA's efforts through level action if necessary to force potentially responsible parties to perform or pay for a Superfund site cleanup.

Feasibility Study (FS): See Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study.

Ground Water: Water found beneath the earth's surface that fills pores between materials such as sand, soil, or gravel. In aquifers, ground water occurs in sufficient quantities that it can be used for drinking water, irrigation, and other purposes.

Hazard Ranking System (HRS): A scoring system used to evaluate potential relative risks to public health and the environment from releases or threatened releases of hazardous substances. EPA and states use the HRS to calculate a site score, from 0 to 100, based on the actual or potential release of hazardous substances from a site through air, surface water, or ground water to affect people. This score is the primary factor used to decide if a hazardous waste site should be placed on the National Priorities List.

Hazardous Substances: Any material that poses a threat to public health and/or the environment. Typical hazardous substances are materials that are toxic, corrosive, ignitable, explosive, or chemically reactive.

National Priorities List (NPL): EPA's list of the most serious controlled or abandoned hazardous waste sites identified for possible long-

term remedial response using money from the Trust Fund. The list is based primarily on the score a site receives on the Hazard Ranking System (HRS). EPA is required to update the NPL at least once a year.

Operation and Maintenance (O&M): Activities conducted at a site after a response action occurs, to ensure that the cleanup or containment system is functioning properly.

Preliminary Assessment (PA): The process of collecting and reviewing available information about a known or suspected hazardous waste site or release. EPA or states use this information to determine if the site requires further study. If further study is needed, a site inspection is undertaken.

Quality Assurance/Quality Control (QA/QC): A system of procedures, checks, audits, and corrective actions used to ensure that field work and laboratory analysis during the investigation and cleanup of Superfund sites meet established standards.

Record of Decision: A public document that explains which cleanup alternative(s) will be used at National Priorities List sites where the Trust Fund pays for the cleanup. The Record of Decision is based on information and technical analysis generated during the remedial investigation/feasibility study and consideration of public comments and community concerns.

Remedial Actions (RA): The actual construction or implementation phase that follows the remedial design of the selected cleanup alternative at a site on the National Priorities List.

Remedial Design (RD): An engineering phase that follows the Record of Decision when technical drawings and specifications are developed for the subsequent remedial action at a site on the National Priorities List.

Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study:

Two different but related studies. They are usually performed at the same time and together referred to as the "RI/FS."

They are intended to:

- Gather the data necessary to determine the type and extent of contamination at a Superfund site;
- Establish criteria for cleaning up the site.
- Identify and screen cleanup alternatives for remedial action; and
- Analyze in detail the technology and costs of the alternatives.

Responsiveness Summary: A summary of oral and/or written public comments received by EPA during a comment period on key EPA documents, and EPA's responses to those comments.

Risk Assessment: An evaluation performed as part of the remedial investigation to assess conditions at a Superfund site and determine the risk posed to public health and/or the environment.

Site Inspection (SI): A technical phase that follows a preliminary assessment designed to collect more extensive information on a hazardous waste site. The information is used to score the site with the Hazard Ranking System to determine whether response action is needed.

Superfund: The common name used for the Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation, and Liability Act. A federal law passed in 1980 and modified in 1986 by the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act. The Acts created a special tax that goes into a Trust Fund, commonly known as Superfund, to investigate and clean up abandoned or controlled hazardous waste sites. Under the program, EPA can either:

- Pay for site cleanup when parties responsible for the contamination cannot be located or are unwilling to be able to perform the work.
- Take legal action to force parties responsible for site contamination to clean up the site or pay back the federal government for the cost of the cleanup.