



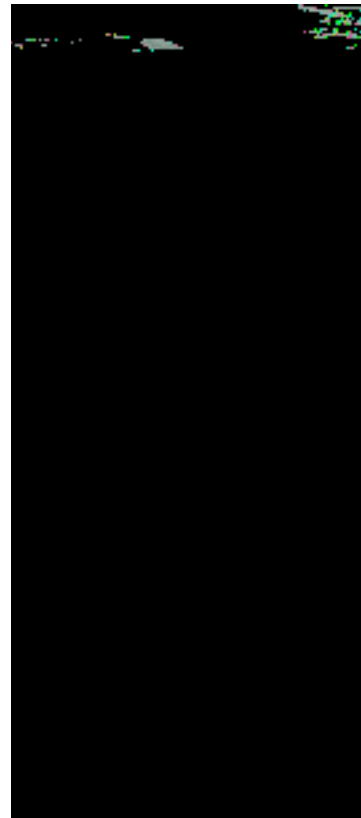
United States
Environmental Protection
Agency

Office of
Emergency and
Remedial Response

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HI I E F ND

A Citizen's Guide to EPA's Superfund Program



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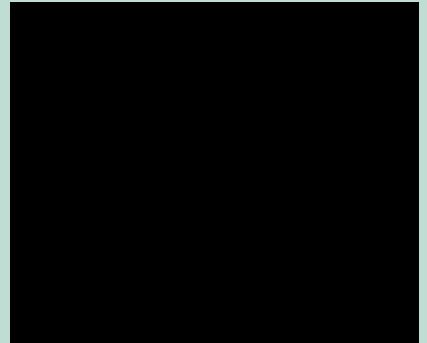
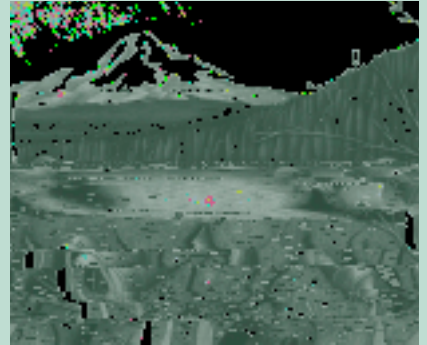
HI I E F ND

A Citizen's Guide to EPA's Superfund Program

United States Environmental Protection Agency
Office of Emergency and Remedial Response
Washington, D.C. 20460

EFACE

IF THERE IS A SUPERFUND SITE in your neighborhood, you are probably wondering, “what will happen?” and, “what can I do?” This brochure will give you a better understanding of the Superfund process and how you can become involved . . .



HAZARDOUS WASTE?

YEARS AGO, people did not understand how certain wastes might affect people's health and the environment. Many wastes were dumped on the ground, in rivers or left out in the open. As a result, thousands of uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste materials were created. Some wastes include toxic substances (pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, insecticides, etc.), heavy metals (lead, mercury, cadmium, chromium, etc.), and organic solvents (gasoline, oil, etc.).

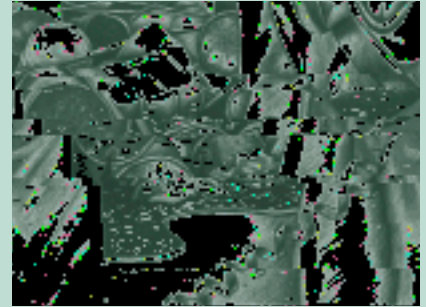
taxes on the chemical and petroleum industries. The Trust Fund is used primarily when those companies or people responsible for

contamination at Superfund sites cannot be found, or cannot perform or pay for the cleanup work.

How Are Superfund Sites Discovered?

HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES are discovered by local and state agencies, businesses, the U.S. EPA, the U.S. Coast Guard, and by people like you. You can report potential hazardous waste sites to the National Response Center Hotline or to

your state and local authorities. To report a hazardous waste site, problem, or emergency, you should call the hotline at 1-800-424-8802. This hotline is operated 24-hours-a-day, seven-days-a-week.



NATIONAL RESPONSE CENTER HOTLINE

If you know of an uncontrolled hazardous waste site or problem, contact the National Response Center Hotline at 1-800-424-8802. The hotline is operated 24-hours-a-day to receive emergency calls.

HA HA EN HEN HE E I A CHEMICAL EME GENC ?

Superfund quickly
responds to chemical
emergencies to

A NUMBER OF THE SITES reported to the National Response Center are emergencies and require immediate action. Emergency actions eliminate immediate risks to ensure your safety. Superfund's number one priority is to protect the people in communities near sites and their environment.

Superfund personnel are on call to respond at a moment's notice to chemical emergencies, accidents, or releases. Typical chemical

emergencies may include train derailments, truck accidents, and incidents at chemical plants where there is a chemical release or threat of a release to the environment. Superfund may respond, or may help state and local authorities to deal with these emergencies quickly. The hazardous materials are hauled away from the site for treatment or proper disposal, or they are treated at the site to make them safe. The risk to the community is removed.

HA HA EN O I E HA
A E NO EME GENCIE ?

EA L AC ION

Early Actions are taken when EPA determines that a site may become a threat to you or your environment in the near future. For example, there may be a site where leaking drums of hazardous substances could ignite or cause harm to you if touched or inhaled. In an instance such as this, EPA takes steps to make sure the situation is

- prevent contaminants from spreading off the site;
- provide water to residents whose drinking water has been contaminated by the site; or
- temporarily or permanently evacuate/relocate nearby residents.

Early Actions may take anywhere from a few days to five years to complete depending on the type and extent of contamination. EPA also determines if Long-term Action will be necessary.

For the remaining sites, EPA tests the soil, water, and air to determine what hazardous substances were left at the site and how serious the risks may be to human health and the environment. Parties responsible for the contamination at the site may conduct these assessments under close EPA supervision. Their involvement in the study and cleanup process is critical in order to make best use of Superfund resources. EPA uses the information collected to decide what type of action, if any, is required.

At this point, EPA works with local leaders and citizens to prepare a Community Involvement Plan (CIP). The CIP ensures local residents have an opportunity to participate in the decision-making process. In addition, EPA sets up a local information file in the community so that citizens can have access to information about the site. The information file or “repository” is usually located at a library or public school and contains the official record of the site, reports, and activities (called the Administrative Record), as well as additional site-related information.

HOW IS SUPERFUND CLEANUP DONE?

SUPERFUND CLEANUPS are very complex and require the efforts of many experts in science, engineering, public health, management, law, community involvement, and numerous other fields. The goal of the process is to protect you and the environment you

live in from the effects of hazardous substances.

Your involvement is very important. You have the opportunity and the right to be involved in and to comment on the work being done.

HOW IS THE NATIONAL PRIORITY LIST DETERMINED?

THE NATIONAL PRIORITIES LIST (NPL) is a published list of hazardous waste sites in the country that are eligible for

extensive, long-term cleanup action under the Superfund program.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GRANTS (TAGS) PROGRAM

EPA values your input and wants to help you understand the technical information relating to the cleanup of Superfund sites in your community so that you can make informed decisions.

Under the Superfund law, EPA can award Technical Assistance Grants (TAGs) of up to \$50,000 per site. TAGs allow communities to hire an independent expert to help them interpret technical data, understand site hazards, and become more knowledgeable about the different technologies that are being used to clean up sites.

Your community group may be eligible for a TAG if you are affected by a Superfund site that is listed on the National Priorities List (NPL) or proposed for listing on the NPL where a response action is underway.

More information about TAGs is available from your Regional EPA Community Involvement Coordinator. An address and number where your coordinator can be reached is listed in the back of this brochure.

How Do We Get On the National IO IIE LI ?

TO EVALUATE THE DANGERS posed by hazardous waste sites, EPA has developed a scoring system called the Hazard Ranking System (HRS). EPA uses the information collected during the assessment phase of the process to score sites according to the danger they may pose to public health and the environment. Sites that score high enough on the HRS are eligible for the NPL. Once a site is scored and meets the criteria, EPA proposes that it be put on the NPL. A site may

also be proposed for the NPL if the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry issues a health advisory for the site or if the site is chosen as the state's top priority site. The proposal is published in the Federal Register and the public has an opportunity to comment in writing on whether the site should be included on the NPL. To obtain more information on a proposed site, contact your Community Involvement Coordinator.



HA HA EN D ING A LONG- E M CLEAN ?

The Superfund process begins when a site is discovered. After EPA screens and assesses the site, the Regional Decision Team determines if the site requires Early Action, Long-term Action, or both. Early Actions are taken at sites that may pose threats to people or the environment in the near future. Long-term Actions are taken at sites that require extensive cleanup. EPA encourages community involvement throughout the Superfund process.

LONG-TERM CLEANUPS are extensive. Built into this process are several phases that lead to the ultimate goal of cleaning up the site and providing a safe environment for the citizens living near the site. Throughout the process, there is opportunity for citizen involvement.

First, a detailed study of the site is done to identify the cause and extent of contamination at the site, the possible threats to the environment and the people

nearby, and options for cleaning up the site.

EPA uses this information to develop and present a Proposed Plan for Long-term Cleanup to citizens and to local and state officials for comment. The Proposed Plan describes the various cleanup options under consideration and identifies the option EPA prefers. The community has at least 30 days to comment on the Proposed Plan. EPA invites community members to a public meeting to express

their views and discuss the Plan with EPA (and sometimes state) officials.

Once the public's concerns are addressed, EPA publishes a Record of Decision, which describes how the agency plans to clean up the site. A notice is also placed in the local newspaper to inform the community of the cleanup decision.

Next, the cleanup method is designed to address the unique conditions at the site where it will be used. This is called the Remedial Design. The design and actual cleanup

are conducted by EPA, the state or the parties responsible for the contamination at the site. EPA closely oversees this design phase and the development of the cleanup at the site. When the design is completed, EPA prepares and distributes a fact sheet to the community describing the design and the actions that will take place at the site.

EPA can put in place the equipment and resources necessary to clean up a site, but it may take a long time to return a site to the way it was before it was contaminated. Some sites, due to the extent of

LONG-TERM ACTION

Early Actions can correct many hazardous waste problems and eliminate most threats to human health and the environment. Some sites, however, require Long-term Action. Long-term Actions include restoring groundwater and taking measures to protect wetlands, estuaries, and other ecological resources.

These sites were caused by years of pollution and may take several years, even decades, to clean up.



also use Superfund Trust Fund money to pay for cleanup costs, then attempt to get the

money back through legal action.

CONCLUSION

EPA'S SUPERFUND PROGRAM is the most aggressive hazardous waste cleanup program in the world. Everyday, Superfund managers are involved in critical decisions that affect public health and the environment. They use the best available science to determine risks at sites. New and innovative technologies are being developed to help achieve faster and less

expensive ways to clean up sites. And, where possible, old hazardous waste sites are being restored to productive use. Millions of people have been protected by Superfund's cleanup actions.

The Superfund Program has one ultimate goal: to protect YOUR health and YOUR environment.



Superfund ensures that the parties responsible for the pollution pay their fair share.

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