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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JAN 10 2001

MEMORANDUM

OFFICE OF  
THE ADMINISTRATOR

SUBJECT: Risk Characterization Handbook

TO: Assistant Administrators  
Regional Administrators  
General Counsel  
Chief Financial Officer  
Inspector General  
Associate Administrators

I am very pleased to present the new Science Policy Council *Risk Characterization Handbook* prepared for EPA staff and managers as a guide to risk characterization. This Handbook is the product of efforts by hundreds of EPA employees who contributed their time over the past five years to implement the Administrator's 1995 Risk Characterization Policy. The Handbook addresses the many recommendations and comments received during its development. The Administrator and I believe that the *Risk Characterization Handbook* will contribute greatly to the Agency's goal of Sound Science and enhance the quality and credibility of Agency decisions. We encourage Agency personnel to follow its guidance when developing risk characterizations for risk assessments.

The *Risk Characterization Handbook* includes guidance in the form of critical elements to be found in a risk characterization. It also provides case studies, which will be updated to reflect new developments in Agency policy over time, as examples to model your risk characterizations. Furthermore, EPA risk assessments to inform decision-making cannot be sound and credible without your support to ensure that the risk assessment process is transparent and that the risk assessment products are consistent, clear and reasonable. These principles should guide each risk characterization.

Following the style of the *Peer Review Handbook*, the *Risk Characterization Handbook* is written in a plain English, question-and-answer format that provides easy, user-friendly guidance for generating useful risk characterizations. I believe it will be an excellent reference and will enhance and reinforce the high standard of risk assessment practiced in all our programs and regions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "W. Michael McCabe".

W. Michael McCabe  
Deputy Administrator

Attachment



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