United States Environmental Protection Agency | Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response | Publication 9203.1-021 May 1992

EPA

Superfund Accelerated Cleanup Bulletin

Presumptive Remedies for Wood Treatment Facilities

Superfund Revitalization Activity
Office of Emergency and Remedial Response
Emergency Response Division OS-210

Intermittent Bulletin
Volume 1 Number 2

The Presumptive Remedy Selection Initiative

Since Superfund's inception in 1980, the removal and remedial programs have found that certain categories of sites have similar characteristics, such as the types of contaminants present, past industrial use, or the environmental media that are affected. Based on a wealth of information acquired from evaluating and cleaning up these sites, Superfund is undertaking an initiative to develop **presumptive remedies** that are appropriate for specific types of sites, contaminants, or both. This initiative is part of a larger program, known as the **Superfund Accelerated Cleanup Model (SACM)**, which is designed to speed all aspects of the Superfund clean-up process.

The objective of the presumptive remedies initiative is to use clean-up techniques shown to be effective in the past at similar sites in the future. The use of presumptive remedies will streamline site studies and removal and remedial clean-up actions, thereby improving consistency, reducing costs, and increasing the speed with which hazardous waste sites are remediated.

Why Wood Treatment Sites?

Our removal and remedial programs have worked at almost 90 wood-treatment sites, many of them on the National Priorities List (NPL), gaining a great deal of data and experience in the process. Three primary types of contaminants, including dioxin, usually predominate at these sites. The facilities tend to be similar. And EPA knows a great deal about assessing such sites, handling the contaminants, and, ultimately, disposing of wood-treatment waste. The Agency's Office of Research and Development (ORD) has also extensively studied these sites. With all this accumulated experience and information, Superfund is ready to establish presumptive remedies that will standardize remedy selection for contaminated wood-treatment sites.

What Are the Components of the Presumptive Remedy Initiative?

The wood-treatment presumptive remedy initiative has five components:

- **Technology Selection Matrix.** This will be a guide to the clean-up technologies known to be appropriate for wood-treatment sites cross-tabulated with the factors to be considered in selecting remedies. The matrix is being developed by the Office of Emergency and Remedial Response's Environmental Response Team.
- **ORD Guidance.** Currently in draft form, this document will evaluate the effectiveness of various technologies on the types of wastes commonly found at wood-treatment sites. The Technology Selection Matrix will complement this guidance.
- **Expert Teams.** The Office of Emergency and Remedial Response (OERR) will establish a team of wood-treatment site experts who can help evaluate sites and aid in making decisions on appropriate clean-up methodologies.
- **Computer-Assisted Remedy Selection.** Currently under development is a computer program that will provide appropriate remedy information based on site characteristics. Although not a substitute for expert decision-making, the program will lead users through the remedy-selection process by narrowing the scope of options, using site characteristics and technology considerations.
- **Pilot Sites.** OERR is looking for wood-treatment sites where it can test its presumptive remedy initiative.

What Will This Initiative Accomplish?

EPA expects the presumptive remedy initiative to reduce the time spent on RI/FSs and to help better integrate the removal and remedial programs.

By being better prepared when the assessment starts—i.e., knowing what contaminants to expect and the best ways to deal with them—and by using a team of experts, we can reduce the time spent on RI/FSs considerably. Currently, individual sites may undergo similar, sequential assessments from the removal program, the site assessment program, the remedial program, and even the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) program. In addition, the U.S. Public Health Service's Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), State and local agencies, and even private parties may conduct their own studies. A standardized sampling and assessment process may reduce the consecutive studies required at these sites.

We expect to do comprehensive cleanup of hazardous waste sites through Superfund's removal or remedial authority. The team of experts contemplated by the presumptive remedy initiative will cross program lines, as will their participation at individual sites. The presumptive remedies will be applicable regardless of which aspect of Superfund is responsible for the site cleanup.

How Will This Initiative Affect Innovative Technologies?

Innovative technologies will always be important to Superfund, since they can reduce disposal quantities, and save time and money. The team of experts will consider the use of innovative technologies at specific sites. As experience is gained, we will incorporate appropriate innovative technologies into the technology matrix. They may also be incorporated in the computer-assisted remedy selection program.

What Is to Follow?

Similar presumptive remedy initiatives for other types of sites, such as landfills and metal-plating facilities are currently before the presumptive remedy workgroup. The types of contaminates to be addressed include PCBs, asbestos, solvents, pesticides, metals, and dioxin.

Further information on the wood-treatment site initiative is available from Harry Allen of the Environmental Response Team at FTS 340-6740, or (201) 321-6740.