



## Superfund LDR Guide #5

# Determining When Land Disposal Restrictions (LDRs) Are Applicable to CERCLA Response Actions

CERCLA Section 121(d)(2) specifies that on-site Superfund remedial actions shall attain “other Federal standards, requirements, criteria, limitations, or more stringent State requirements that are determined to be legally applicable or relevant and appropriate (ARAR) to the specified circumstances at the site.” In addition, the National Contingency Plan (NCP) requires that on-site removal actions attain ARARs to the extent practicable. Off-site removal and remedial actions must comply with legally applicable requirements. **This guide outlines the process used to determine whether the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) land disposal restrictions (LDRs) established under the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments (HSWA) are “applicable” to a CERCLA response action.** More detailed guidance on Superfund compliance with the LDRs is being prepared by the Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response (OSWER).

For the LDRs to be applicable to a CERCLA response, the action must constitute placement of a restricted RCRA hazardous waste. Therefore, site managers (OSCs, RPMs) must answer three separate questions to determine if the LDRs are applicable:

- (1) Does the response action constitute placement?
- (2) Is the CERCLA substance being placed also a RCRA hazardous waste? and if so
- (3) Is the RCRA waste restricted under the LDRs?

Site managers also must determine if the CERCLA substances are California list wastes, which are a distinct category of RCRA hazardous wastes restricted under the LDRs (see Superfund LDR Guide #2).

### (1) DOES THE RESPONSE CONSTITUTE PLACEMENT?

The LDRs place specific restrictions (e.g., treatment of waste to concentration levels) on RCRA hazardous wastes prior to their placement in land disposal units. Therefore, a key determination is whether the response action will constitute placement of wastes into a land disposal unit. As defined by RCRA, land disposal units include landfills, surface impoundments, waste piles, injection wells, land treatment facilities, salt dome formations, underground mines or caves, and concrete bunkers or vaults. If a CERCLA response includes disposal of wastes in any of these types of off-site land disposal units, placement will occur. However, uncontrolled hazardous waste sites often have widespread and dispersed contamination, making the

concept of a RCRA unit less useful for actions involving on-site disposal of wastes. Therefore, to assist in defining when “placement” does and does not occur for CERCLA actions involving on-site disposal of wastes, EPA uses the concept of “areas of contamination” (AOCs), which may be viewed as equivalent to RCRA units, for the purposes of LDR applicability determinations.

An AOC is delineated by the areal extent (or boundary) of contiguous contamination. Such contamination must be continuous, but may contain varying types and concentrations of hazardous substances. Depending on site characteristics, one or more AOCs may be delineated. **Highlight 1** provides some examples of AOCs.

#### Highlight 1: EXAMPLES OF AREAS OF CONTAMINATION (AOCs)

- # A waste source (e.g., waste pit, landfill, waste pile) and the surrounding contaminated soil.
- # A waste source, and the sediments in a stream contaminated by the source, where the contamination is continuous from the source to the sediments.\*
- # Several lagoons separated only by dikes, where the dikes are contaminated and the lagoons share a common liner.

\* The AOC does not include any contaminated surface or ground water that may be associated with the land-based waste source.

For on-site disposal, placement occurs when wastes are moved from one AOC (or unit) into another AOC (or unit). Placement does not occur when wastes are left in place, or moved within a single AOC. **Highlight 2** provides scenarios of when placement does and does not occur, as defined in the proposed NCP. The Agency is current reevaluating the definition of placement prior to the promulgation of the final NCP, and therefore, these scenarios are subject to change.

### Highlight 2: PLACEMENT

Placement does occur when wastes are:

- # Consolidated from different AOCs into a single AOC;
- # Moved outside of an AOC (for treatment or storage, for example) and returned to the same or a different AOC; or
- # Excavated from an AOC, placed in a separate unit, such as an incinerator or tank that is within the AOC, and redeposited into the same AOC.

Placement does not occur when wastes are:

- # Treated in situ;
- # Capped in place;
- # Consolidated within the AOC; or
- # Processed within the AOC (but not in a separate unit, such as a tank) to improve its structural stability (e.g., for capping or to support heavy machinery).

**In summary, if placement on-site or off-site does not occur, the LDRs are not applicable to the Superfund action.**

### (2) IS THE CERCLA SUBSTANCE A RCRA HAZARDOUS WASTE?

Because a CERCLA response must constitute placement of a restricted RCRA hazardous waste for the LDRs to be applicable, site managers must evaluate whether the contaminants at the CERCLA site are RCRA hazardous wastes. **Highlight 3** briefly describes the two types of

RCRA hazardous wastes --listed and characteristic wastes.

### Highlight 3: RCRA HAZARDOUS WASTES

A RCRA **solid waste**\* is hazardous if it is listed or exhibits a hazardous characteristic.

#### Listed RCRA Hazardous Wastes

Any waste listed in Subpart D of 40 CFR 261, including:

- # F waste codes (Part 261.31)
- # K waste codes (Part 261.32)
- # P waste codes (Part 261.33(e))
- # U waste codes (Part 261.33(f))

#### Characteristic RCRA Hazardous Wastes

Any waste exhibiting one of the following characteristics, as defined in 40 CFR 261:

- # Ignitability
- # Corrosivity
- # Reactivity
- # Extraction Procedure (EP) Toxicity

\* A solid waste is any material that is discarded or disposed of (i.e., abandoned, recycled in certain ways, or considered inherently waste-like). The waste may be solid, semi-solid, liquid, or a contained gaseous material. Exclusions from the definition (e.g., domestic sewage sludge) appear in 40 CFR 261.4(a). Exemptions (e.g., household wastes) are found in 40 CFR 261.4(b).

Site managers are not required to presume that a CERCLA hazardous substance is a RCRA hazardous waste unless there is affirmative evidence to support such a finding. Site managers, therefore, should use "reasonable efforts" to determine whether a substance is a RCRA listed or characteristic waste. (Current data collection efforts during CERCLA removal and

remedial site investigations should be sufficient for this purpose.) For listed hazardous wastes, if manifests or labels are not available, this evaluation likely will require fairly specific information about the waste (e.g., source, prior use, process type) that is “reasonably ascertainable” within the scope of a Superfund investigation. Such information may be obtained from facility business records or from an examination of the processes used at the facility. For characteristic wastes, site managers may rely on the results of the tests described in 40 CFR 261.21 - 261.24 for each characteristic or on knowledge of the properties of the substance. Site managers should work with Regional RCRA staff, Regional Counsel, State RCRA staff, and Superfund enforcement personnel, as appropriate, in making these determinations.

In addition to understanding the two categories of RCRA hazardous wastes, site managers will also need to understand the derived-from rule, the mixture rule, and the contained-in interpretation to identify correctly whether a CERCLA substance is a RCRA hazardous waste. These three principles, as well as an introduction to the RCRA delisting process, are described below.

#### **Derived-from Rule (40 CFR 261.3(c)(2))**

The derived-from rule states that any solid waste derived from the treatment, storage, or disposal of a listed RCRA hazardous waste is itself a listed hazardous waste (regardless of the concentration of hazardous constituents). For example, ash and scrubber water from the incineration of a listed waste are hazardous wastes on the basis of the derived-from rule. Solid wastes derived from a characteristic hazardous waste are hazardous wastes only if they exhibit a characteristic.

#### **Mixture Rule (40 CFR 261.3(a)(2))**

Under the mixture rule, when any solid waste and a listed hazardous waste are mixed, the entire mixture is a listed hazardous waste. For example, if a generator mixes a drum of listed F006 electroplating waste with a non-hazardous wastewater (wastewaters are solid wastes - see **Highlight 3**), the entire mixture of the F006 and wastewater is a listed hazardous waste. Mixtures of solid wastes, and characteristic hazardous wastes are hazardous

only if the mixture exhibits a characteristic.

#### **Contained-in Interpretation (OSW Memorandum dated November 13, 1986)**

The contained-in interpretation states that any mixture of a non-solid waste and a RCRA listed hazardous waste must be managed as a hazardous waste as long as the material contains (i.e., is above health-based levels) the listed hazardous waste. For example, if soil or ground water (i.e., both non-solid wastes) contain an F001 spent solvent, that soil or ground water must be managed as a RCRA hazardous waste, as long as it “contains” the F001 spent solvent.

#### **Delisting (40 CFR 260.20 and .22)**

To be exempted from the RCRA hazardous waste “system,” a listed hazardous waste, a mixture of a listed and solid waste, or a derived-from waste must be delisted (according to 40 CFR 260.20 and .22). Characteristic hazardous wastes never need to be delisted, but can be treated to no longer exhibit the characteristic. A contained-in waste also does not have to be delisted; it only has to “no longer contain” the hazardous waste.

If site managers determine that the hazardous substance(s) at the site is a RCRA hazardous waste(s), they should also determine whether that RCRA waste is a California list waste. California list wastes are a distinct category of RCRA wastes restricted under the LDRs (see Superfund LDR Guide #2).

#### **(3) IS THE RCRA WASTE RESTRICTED UNDER THE LDRs?**

If a site manager determines that a CERCLA waste is a RCRA hazardous waste, this waste also must be restricted for the LDRs to be an applicable requirement. A RCRA hazardous waste becomes a restricted waste on its HSWA statutory deadline or sooner if the Agency promulgates a standard before the deadline. Because the LDRs are being phased in over a period of time (see **Highlight 4**), site managers may need to determine what type of restriction is in

**Highlight 4: LDR STATUTORY DEADLINES**

Waste	Statutory Deadline
Spent Solvent and Dioxin-Containing Wastes	November 8, 1986
California List Wastes	July 8, 1987
First Third Wastes	August 8, 1988
Spent Solvent, Dioxin-Containing, and California List Soil and Debris From CERCLA/RCRA Corrective Actions	November 8, 1988
Second Third Wastes	June 8, 1989
Third Third Wastes	May 8, 1990
Newly Identified Wastes	Within 6 months of identification as a hazardous waste

effect at the time placement is to occur. For example, if the RCRA hazardous wastes at a site are currently under a national capacity extension when the CERCLA decision document is signed, site managers should evaluate whether the response action will be completed before the extension expires. If these wastes are disposed of in surface impoundments or landfills prior to the expiration of the extension, the receiving unit would have to meet minimum technology requirements, but the wastes would not have to be treated to meet the LDR treatment standards.

**APPLICABILITY DETERMINATIONS**

If the site manager determines that the LDRs are applicable to the CERCLA response based on the previous three questions, the site manager must: (1) comply with the

LDR restriction in effect, (2) comply with the LDRs by choosing one of the LDR compliance options (e.g., Treatability Variance, No Migration Petition), or (3) invoke an ARAR waiver (available only for on-site actions). If the LDRs are determined not to be applicable, then, for on-site actions only, the site manager should determine if the LDRs are relevant and appropriate. The process for determining whether the LDRs are applicable to a CERCLA action is summarized in **Highlight 5**.

**Highlight 5 - DETERMINING WHEN LDRS ARE APPLICABLE REQUIREMENTS**

