

AN OVERVIEW OF THE CERCLA FIVE-YEAR REVIEW PROGRAM AND HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED

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The purpose of this presentation is to provide a brief description of the Five-Year Review Program and the Corps' capability to conduct these reviews for our customers. Five-Year Reviews are required whenever a response action results in hazardous substances or contaminants remaining onsite, above levels that allow for unlimited use and unlimited exposure. The Five-Year Review Program is intended to evaluate whether the remedial action, taken at a particular site, remains protective of public health and the environment.

Five-Year Reviews entail developing answers to three primary questions: 1) Is the remedy functioning as intended by the decision document? 2) Are the exposure assumptions, toxicity data, clean-up levels and remedial objectives used at the time of the remedy still valid? and 3) Has any other information come to light that could call into question the protectiveness of the remedy? Answers to these questions are determined through a site inspection, interviews, a review and evaluation of existing O&M and site monitoring data. The review documents its findings in a report, which includes a list of recommendations to correct any deficiencies or improve performance, and concludes with a statement of protectiveness (e.g. the site is protective; the remedy will be protective when completed; or the remedy is protective in the short-term but follow-up actions are needed; or the site is not protective of human health and the environment).

In order to conduct a Five-Year Review, the initial step involves obtaining available information relating to the remedial action taken at the site. Typically, the ROD, RI/FS, design documents, annual sampling results, and O&M practices are reviewed to determine site design assumptions and system performance goals. The review team will then perform a site inspection, conduct interviews, and analyze available data in order to determine the effectiveness of the remedy in place at the site.

The Corps of Engineers has conducted several Five-Year Reviews for EPA. To date, various districts have conducted over 30 reviews with support from the HTRW-CX. In FY 2001, fourteen reviews are being conducted by various districts. By using local districts, with capable technical staff, the Corps has provided thorough reviews that meet the budget and scheduling needs of our customers. Lessons learned during these site reviews have provided valuable insight regarding the effectiveness of various remedies and typical system deficiencies. The HTRW-CX can actively support districts by providing technical assistance, sample reports, and typical costs to conduct comprehensive Five-Year Reviews.

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