

EPA issues draft implementation plan

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By Robert Joyce

On December 9, 2010, EPA issued its draft plan aimed at implementing its recently announced Integrated Cleanup Initiative. The Initiative is aimed at accelerating cleanups and implementing other improvements to the Agency's various land cleanup programs. According to EPA, the main goals of the Initiative are to speed up the cleanup process, address more contaminated sites, and place sites back into productive use. EPA's plan focuses on "integrating approaches and leveraging best practices across the full spectrum of contaminated sites – Superfund, brownfields, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) corrective action, federal facilities, and underground storage tanks," and enhancing opportunities for the public to play an active role in the site revitalization process. In addition, EPA plans to step-up its enforcement activities to seek increased accountability from those determined responsible for contamination and to "ensure that responsible parties are compelled to clean up contaminated sites."



The Implementation Plan describes the Agency's specific objectives for the Initiative and sets forth Agency actions for the next three years. The Plan identifies five main objectives:

- Starting cleanups by focusing on early "site identification and assessment activities"
- Advancing cleanups by coordinating during cleanup and developing new enforcement strategies
- Completing cleanups through the use of pilot projects "aimed at accelerating cleanups" as well as increased reporting to the public and "leveraging revitalization efforts"
- Evaluating performance metrics and effectiveness
- Communicating the progress and benefits to the public. For each of these objectives, EPA identifies a number of specific tasks and assigns responsibility for completion of those tasks to various federal, state and tribal offices/agencies

Overall, the Agency has identified 26 specific steps to be taken in the next three years by the various governmental organizations.

One of the first objectives of the Plan is to implement a new measure for reporting cleanup progress at Superfund sites. This measure – "remedial action project completions – is designed to report on discrete steps in the cleanup process at a site and will supplement EPA's current reporting on site-wide cleanup construction completion. EPA explains that this new measure "will provide communities with a



valuable new tool to evaluate and hold EPA accountable for ongoing progress and risk reduction at Superfund sites” and allows the program to be managed in a way “that more closely aligns with the real work in the field.”

In connection with the Initiative, EPA has set a goal of completing cleanup at 95 percent of the 3747 contaminated sites it has identified by 2020. The Agency is accepting comments on the Plan through January 10, 2011.

- [The Plan can be found on EPA’s website for the Integrated Cleanup Initiative here](#)

LINKS

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