

Office of  
Solid Waste and  
Emergency Response

# Overview of Presumptive Remedies

Office of Emergency and Remedial Response  
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Superfund's extensive experience in complex toxic waste site cleanup has revealed certain consistencies in site characteristics and remedies. Some categories of sites have similar characteristics, such as types of contaminants present, past industrial use, or environmental media affected. The "presumptive remedy" initiative looks for remedies that are appropriate for specific site types and/or contaminants. Its objective is to use the program's past experience to streamline site investigations and make remedy selection speedier and more predictable. The five types of sites for which there is (or soon will be) presumptive remedy guidance are:

- VOCs in Soils
- Municipal Landfills
- Metals in Soils (scheduled for early FY98 release)
- Wood Treaters
- Contaminated Ground Water

So, what are the advantages of using the presumptive remedies? They offer several advantages over the conventional remedy selection process. Presumptive remedies:

- **Save time and money** — At municipal landfills implementing the containment presumptive remedy, for example, EPA estimates time savings ranging from 36 to 56 percent, and cost savings up to 60 percent resulting from a streamlined remedial investigation/feasibility study process.
- **Help promote consistency in the remedy selection** — Ensures that similar remedies are used for similar types of contamination and allows cross-site comparisons, which ultimately minimizes the time involved in remedy selection decisions.
- **Improve the predictability of the remedy selection process for communities and PRPs** — Allows interested parties to review previous actions taken at similar sites—increasing their comfort level in accepting the selected remedy and hastening the selection process.
- **Take no extra time or effort** — The steps you must follow to implement a presumptive remedy are aspects of your daily job duties. In other words, these savings can be achieved without increasing your workload, and they may even streamline your workload.
- **Are supported by experts** — RPMs can access presumptive remedy experts that will be able to provide support and information to assist you during implementation.
- **Are NCP compliant** — The use of presumptive remedies advances the NCP remedy

selection objectives in that they promote consistency in decision-making and carry out the screening step in a generic manner. This approach minimizes the steps needed to perform this analysis at a site-specific level.

Presumptive remedies are also Superfund policy. EPA guidance states that presumptive remedies are expected to be used at all appropriate sites, except under unusual site-specific circumstances. This means that RPMs working at the types of sites discussed above *should* investigate the possibility of implementing a presumptive remedy.

This website contains the current guidance, users guides, and supplemental information available on specific presumptive remedies.

Presumptive remedies are not new. EPA has been using them since 1993. As of October 1997, presumptive remedies have been used or are being used at 48 Superfund sites, and more than 80 operable units, across the country.

In short, EPA expects that the use of presumptive remedies will streamline cleanup actions while improving consistency, reducing costs, and speeding remediation. This website will provide you with all the tools necessary to implement a presumptive remedy at your site.

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URL: <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/resources/presump/intro.htm>  
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