



Superfund and You - *The Remedial Investigation*

How is EPA addressing health risks from dust under carpets, vermiculite in walls or gardens, or working in attics? These and other questions related to the Libby Asbestos site are being addressed in the Remedial Investigation (RI) report, which we hope to issue in spring 2006.

The purpose of the RI is to determine the nature and extent of Libby amphibole (LA) asbestos contamination and to assess the associated risks. EPA's goal is not to remove all uncertainty, but to reduce it to a level that will allow us to make a reasonable decision on what the final cleanup strategy will be for Libby.

Investigations at the Libby site have spotlighted gaps in the scientific community's knowledge of asbestos risk. EPA acknowledged those gaps early in the process, and we have worked diligently to advance the science and address uncertainties with cutting-edge studies.

For example:

- We developed new techniques for measuring asbestos and collected data at more than 4,200 properties
- We documented the occurrence of LA asbestos in vermiculite
- We devised specific sampling scenarios to address questions – such as how much asbestos becomes airborne during gardening, vacuuming, or working in attics

The results of this work will be documented in highly-specific, technical memos that support the RI and risk management. These memos,

and all other supporting documents, will be included in the RI report on compact disks.

The RI report will present an analysis of all data collected at the Libby Asbestos Site. Along with the Baseline Risk Assessment (BRA), it will present estimates of risk to human health and the environment. It is also the basis for the analysis of cleanup alternatives that will be conducted in the Feasibility Study (FS).

EPA has taken the unusual step of writing the Libby RI report ourselves, rather than delegating it to a contractor, as is typical. We felt that the unique nature of the waste and the history at the Libby site demands this action.

We are committed to writing the RI in a way that will allow the average Libby citizen to read and understand the material. Some of the technical issues are very complex, but we hope to be able to meet this goal. We believe the report will help residents understand how cleanup decisions are made. For example, the report will show how analytical results and risk assessment information are used to make important decisions at the Site, such as whether or not to leave vermiculite in wall cavities or to remove carpets during cleanup.

For More Information...

In the future, we will discuss the technical memos, FS, and the Proposed Plan, as well as the opportunities for public comment. EPA and our contractor, CDM, will be happy to provide additional information, and we also encourage citizens to contact the Libby CAG or TAG for assistance. For more information, contact the EPA Information Center at 501 Mineral Avenue (293-6194).

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