



Superfund and You - *Technical Memos of the RI*

Last month's column discussed the Remedial Investigation (RI) report that EPA is now writing. That report addresses issues important to people in Libby, such as: how EPA is addressing health risks from contaminated dust under carpets or from exposure to vermiculite in walls or yards? Through the RI, EPA seeks to gain enough information about the Libby Asbestos Site to allow us to make a reasonable decision about what the final cleanup strategy will be for Libby.

The RI report will present an analysis of all data collected at the Libby site. It will also present estimates of risk to human health and the environment. These estimates will be factored into the risk management decisions that will be made about the Site and the cleanup. In addition, these estimates will form the basis for the analysis of cleanup alternatives that will be conducted in the Feasibility Study (FS).

One of the major components of the RI is a series of technical memos. These memos document a number of studies that EPA undertook to address data gaps in the scientific community's knowledge of Libby amphibole asbestos. In many instances, these studies have resulted in cutting-edge advances in the science of asbestos measurement and analysis.

For example, EPA wanted to know more about the potential presence of asbestos in air around Libby. That study is documented in a special report titled *Summary of Asbestos Levels in Ambient Air in Libby, Montana*.

Some of the other issues covered by the technical memos are:

- What is the best way to analyze a soil, dust or air sample?
- What do dust samples tell us about the risks in homes that have vermiculite insulation?
- How do asbestos exposures vary depending on what activity a resident may be doing around a contaminated home?
- How much asbestos can be released to air when contaminated soil is disturbed?
- Do houses that have been cleaned by EPA remain clean over time?

These technical memos will be included in CD format as appendices to the RI. Although they are crucial to EPA's risk management and decision-making process, they may be technically overwhelming to the average RI reader.

However, readers should be assured that the findings of the memos have been incorporated into the RI in a format that can be understood by people who are not technical experts. The memos themselves serve as important documentation that supports the decisions made at the site.

For More Information...

In the future, we will discuss the 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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