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Management of Remediation Waste Under RCRA

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UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 14 1998

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Management of Remediation Waste Under RCRA

FROM: Timothy Fields, Jr., Acting Assistant Administrator for Solid Waste and Emergency Response

Steven A. Herman, Assistant Administrator for Enforcement and Compliance Assurance

TO: RCRA/CERCLA Senior Policy Managers
Regional Counsels

Rapid clean up of RCRA corrective action facilities and Superfund sites is one of the Agency's highest priorities. In this context, we often receive questions about management of remediation waste under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). To assist you in successfully implementing RCRA requirements for remediation waste, this memorandum consolidates existing guidance on the RCRA regulations and policies that most often affect remediation waste management. We encourage you to work with the regulations, policies and approaches outlined in this memorandum to achieve our cleanup goals as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Note that not all remediation wastes are subject to RCRA Subtitle C hazardous waste requirements. As with any other solid waste, remediation wastes are subject to RCRA Subtitle C only if they are listed or identified hazardous waste. Environmental media are subject to RCRA Subtitle C only if they contain listed hazardous waste, or exhibit a characteristic of hazardous waste. These distinctions are discussed more completely below.

The information in this memo is divided into three categories: information on regulations and policies that apply to all remediation waste; information on regulations and policies that apply only to contaminated media; and, information on regulations and policies that apply only to contaminated debris. Most of the references cited in this memo are available over the Internet. The Federal Register notices published after 1994 are available at www.access.gpo.gov/nara; the

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guidance memos and other EPA documents are available at www.epa.gov/correctiveaction. Federal Register notices and other documents are also available through the RCRA/CERCLA hotline: in Washington D.C., call (703) 412-9810; outside Washington D.C., call (800) 424-9346; and hearing impaired call (800) 553-7672. The hotline's hours are Monday - Friday, excluding Federal holidays, 8:00 - 5:00, eastern standard time. Many EPA guidance memos and other documents may also be obtained through the RCRA/CERCLA hotline fax-back system. To obtain a list of documents available over the fax-back system, and fax-back system code numbers, call the RCRA/CERCLA hotline at the numbers listed above.

I hope this information will assist you as you continue to make protective, inclusive, and efficient cleanup decisions. If you have additional questions or require more information, please contact Robert Hall or Greg Madden, of our staffs, on (703) 308-8484 or (202) 564-4229 respectively.

Regulations and Policies that Apply to All Remediation Wastes

Area of Contamination Policy. In what is typically referred to as the area of contamination (AOC) policy, EPA interprets RCRA to allow certain discrete areas of generally dispersed contamination to be considered RCRA units (usually landfills). Because an AOC is equated to a RCRA land-based unit, consolidation and *in situ* treatment of hazardous waste within the AOC do not create a new point of hazardous waste generation for purposes of RCRA. This interpretation allows wastes to be consolidated or treated *in situ* within an AOC without triggering land disposal restrictions or minimum technology requirements. The AOC interpretation may be applied to any hazardous remediation waste (including non-media wastes) that is in or on the land. Note that the AOC policy only covers consolidation and other in situ waste management techniques carried out within an AOC. For *ex situ* waste management or transfer of wastes from one area of contamination to another, see discussion of corrective action management units, below.

The AOC policy was first articulated in the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP). See 53 FR 51444 for detailed discussion in proposed NCP preamble; 55 FR 8758-8760, March 8, 1990 for final NCP preamble discussion. See also, most recent EPA guidance, March 13, 1996 EPA memo, "Use of the Area of Contamination Concept During RCRA Cleanups."

Corrective Action Management Units (CAMUs). The corrective action management unit rule created a new type of RCRA unit – a Corrective Action Management Unit or CAMU -- specifically intended for treatment, storage and disposal of hazardous remediation waste. Under the CAMU rule, EPA and authorized states may develop and impose site-specific design, operating, closure and post-closure requirements for CAMUs in lieu of MTRs for land-based units. Although there is a strong preference for use of CAMUs to facilitate treatment, remediation waste placed in approved CAMUs does not have to meet LDR treatment standards.

The main differences between CAMUs and the AOC policy (discussed above) are that, when a CAMU is used, waste may be treated *ex situ* and then placed in a CAMU, CAMUs may be located in uncontaminated areas at a facility, and wastes may be consolidated into CAMUs from areas that are not contiguously contaminated. None of these activities are allowed under the AOC policy, which, as discussed above, covers only consolidation and *in situ* management techniques carried out within an AOC.

CAMUs must be approved by EPA or an authorized state and designated in a permit or corrective action order. In certain circumstances, EPA and states (including states that are not authorized for the CAMU regulations) may use other mechanisms to approve CAMUs. See, 58 FR 8677, February 16, 1993; appropriate use of RCRA Section 7003 orders and comparable state orders is discussed below and in an EPA guidance memo from J. Winston Porter to EPA Regional Administrators, "RCRA Permit Requirements for State Superfund Actions," November 16, 1987, OSWER Directive 9522.00-2. In addition, as appropriate, CAMUs may be approved by EPA as an applicable or relevant and appropriate requirement during a CERCLA cleanup using a record of decision or by an authorized state during a state cleanup using a CERCLA-like authority and a similar state document. See, e.g., 58 FR 8679, February 16, 1993. An opportunity for the public to review and comment on tentative CAMU approvals is required by the regulations when CAMUs are approved using permitting procedures and as a matter of EPA policy when CAMUs are approved using orders. EPA recommends that, whenever possible, remediation project managers combine this public participation with other public involvement activities that are typically part of remediation. For example, public notice of tentative approval of a CAMU could be combined with public notice of a proposed plan under CERCLA.

The CAMU rule is currently subject to litigation; however, the suit has been stayed pending promulgation of the final HWIR-Media regulations. Although EPA proposed to withdraw CAMUs as part of the HWIR-Media proposal, the Agency now intends to retain the CAMU rule. The Agency encourages approval of CAMUs when they are appropriate given the site-specific conditions.

The CAMU regulations are at 40 CFR 264.552, promulgated February 16, 1993 (58 FR 8658). The differences between CAMUs and AOCs are discussed in more detail in the March 13, 1996 EPA guidance memo, "Use of the Area of Contamination Concept During RCRA Cleanups."

Corrective Action Temporary Units (TUs). Temporary units, like corrective action management units, are RCRA units established specifically for management of hazardous remediation waste. The regulations for temporary units (TUs) were promulgated at the same time as the regulations for corrective action management units. The CAMU regulations established land-based units for treatment, storage and disposal of remediation waste; the TU regulations established non-land based units for treatment and storage of hazardous remediation waste. Under the TU regulations, EPA and authorized states may modify existing MTR design, operating and closure standards for temporary tank and container units used to treat and store

hazardous remediation waste. Temporary units may operate for one year, with an opportunity for a one year extension.

Like CAMUs, temporary units must be approved by EPA or an authorized state and designated in a permit or corrective action order. In certain circumstances, EPA and states (including states that are not authorized for the TU regulations) may use other mechanisms to approve TUs. See, 58 FR 8677, February 16, 1993; appropriate use of RCRA Section 7003 orders and comparable state orders is discussed below and in an EPA guidance memo from J. Winston Porter to EPA Regional Administrators, "RCRA Permit Requirements for State Superfund Actions," November 16, 1987, OSWER Directive 9522.00-2. In addition, as appropriate, TUs may be approved by EPA as an applicable or relevant and appropriate requirement during a CERCLA cleanup using a record of decision or by an authorized state during a state cleanup using a CERCLA-like authority and a similar state document. Placement of waste in tanks or containers, including temporary units, is not considered land disposal. Therefore, waste does not have to be treated to meet LDR treatment standards prior to being placed in a TU. Of course, LDRs must be met if hazardous remediation wastes are eventually land disposed, for example, after they are removed from the TU; however, if treatment in a TU results in constituent concentrations that comply with applicable land disposal restriction treatment standards, no further treatment prior to land disposal is required as a condition of the LDRs.

An opportunity for the public to review and comment on tentative TU approvals is required by the regulations when TUs are approved using permitting procedures and as a matter of EPA policy when TUs are approved using orders. As with CAMUs, EPA recommends that whenever possible, remediation project managers combine this public participation with other public involvement activities that are typically part of remediation. For example, public notice of tentative approval of a temporary unit could be combined with public notice of a proposed plan under CERCLA.

The TU regulations are at 40 CFR 264.553, promulgated February 16, 1993 (58 FR 8658).

Determination Of When Contamination is Caused by Listed Hazardous Waste. Where a facility owner/operator makes a good faith effort to determine if a material is a listed hazardous waste but cannot make such a determination because documentation regarding a source of contamination, contaminant, or waste is unavailable or inconclusive, EPA has stated that one may assume the source, contaminant or waste is not listed hazardous waste and, therefore, provided the material in question does not exhibit a characteristic of hazardous waste, RCRA requirements do not apply. This approach was first articulated in the Proposed NCP preamble which notes that it is often necessary to know the source of a waste (or contaminant) to

determine whether a waste is a listed hazardous waste under RCRA[1] and also notes that, "at many CERCLA sites no information exists on the source of the wastes." The proposed NCP preamble goes on to recommend that the lead agency use available site information such as manifests, storage records and vouchers in an effort to ascertain the sources of wastes or contaminants, but that when this documentation is not available or inconclusive the lead agency may assume that the wastes (or contaminants) are not listed RCRA hazardous wastes. This approach was confirmed in the final NCP preamble. See, 53 FR 51444, December 21, 1988 for proposed NCP preamble discussion; 55 FR 8758, March 13, 1990 for final NCP preamble discussion.

This approach was also discussed in the HWIR-Media proposal preamble, 61 FR 18805, April 29, 1996, where it was expanded to also cover dates of waste disposal – i.e., if, after a good faith effort to determine dates of disposal a facility owner/operator is unable to make such a determination because documentation of dates of disposal is unavailable or inconclusive, one may assume disposal occurred prior to the effective date of applicable land disposal restrictions. This is important because, if hazardous waste was originally disposed of before the effective dates of applicable land disposal restrictions and media contaminated by the waste are determined not to contain hazardous waste when first generated (i.e., removed from the land, or area of contamination), the media are not subject to RCRA requirements, including LDRs. See the discussion of the contained-in policy, below.

Site Specific LDR Treatment Variances. The regulations for site-specific LDR treatment variances allow EPA and authorized states to establish a site-specific LDR treatment standard on a case-by-case basis when a nationally applicable treatment standard is unachieveable or inappropriate. Public notice and a reasonable opportunity for public comment must be provided before granting or denying a site-specific LDR treatment variance. EPA recommends that remediation project managers combine this public involvement with other public involvement activities that are typically part of remediation. Regulations governing site-specific LDR treatment variances are at 40 CFR 268.44(h), promulgated August 17, 1988 (53 FR 31199) and clarified December 5, 1997 (62 FR 64504). The most recent EPA guidance on site-specific LDR treatment variances, which includes information on establishing alternative LDR treatment standards, is in the January 8, 1997 guidance memo, "Use of Site-Specific Land Disposal Restriction Treatability Variances Under 40 CFR 268.44(h) During Cleanups."

In 1996, EPA revised its policy on state authorization for site-specific LDR treatment variances and began encouraging states to become authorized to approve variances. See, HWIR-Media proposal, 61 FR 18828 (April 29, 1996).

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[1] Listing determinations are often particularly difficult in the remedial context because the listings are generally identified by the sources of the hazardous wastes rather than the concentrations of various hazardous constituents; therefore, analytical testing alone, without information on a waste's source, will not generally produce information that will conclusively indicate whether a given waste is a listed hazardous waste.

On May 26, 1998, EPA promulgated additional site-specific land disposal restriction treatment variance opportunities specific to hazardous contaminated soil. These opportunities are discussed below.

Treatability Studies Exemption. The term "treatability study"as defined at 40 CFR 260.10 refers to a study in which a hazardous waste is subjected to a treatment process to determine: (1) whether the waste is amenable to the treatment process; (2) what pretreatment (if any) is required; (3) the optimal process conditions needed to achieve the desired treatment; (4) the efficiency of a treatment process for a specific waste or wastes; or, (5) the characteristics and volumes of residuals from a particular treatment process. Under regulations at 40 CFR 261.4(e) and (f), hazardous wastes managed during a treatability study are exempt from many RCRA Subtitle C requirements. The regulations limit the amount of waste that may be managed under an exempt treatability study to, generally, 1000 kg of hazardous waste or 1 kg of acutely hazardous waste per study. For contaminated environmental media, the volume limit is, generally, 10,000 kilograms of media that contain non-acutely hazardous waste and 2,500 kilograms of media that contain acutely hazardous waste per study. There are also limits on the types and lengths of studies that may be conducted under the exemption and record keeping and reporting requirements. Regulations governing treatability studies are at 40 CFR 261.4(e) and (f), associated preamble discussions at 52 FR 27290 (July 19, 1988) and 59 FR 8362 (February 18, 1994).

Exemption for Ninety Day Accumulation. Management of hazardous waste in tanks, containers, drip pads and containment buildings does not constitute land disposal. In addition, EPA has provided an exemption for generators of hazardous waste which allows them to accumulate (i.e., treat or store) hazardous waste at the site of generation in tanks, containers, drip pads or containment buildings for up to ninety days without RCRA interim status or a RCRA permit. Accumulation units must meet applicable design, operating, closure and post-closure standards. Because putting hazardous waste in a tank, container, drip pad or containment building is not considered land disposal, LDR treatment standards do not have to be met before putting waste in such units. LDRs must be met if hazardous wastes are eventually land disposed, for example, after they are removed from the accumulation unit; however, if treatment in an accumulation unit results in constituent concentrations that comply with applicable land disposal restriction treatment standards, no further treatment prior to land disposal is required as a condition of the LDRs. The exemption for ninety-day accumulation is found in regulations at 40 CFR 262.34; associated preamble discussion is at 51 FR at 10168 (March 24, 1986).

Permit Waivers. Under CERCLA Section 121(e), no Federal, state or local permit is required for on-site CERCLA response actions. EPA has interpreted CERCLA Section 121(e) to waive the requirement to obtain a permit and associated administrative and procedural requirements of permits, but not the substantive requirements that would be applied through

permits.[2]

In addition, on a case-by-case basis, where there may be an imminent and substantial endangerment to human health or the environment, EPA has broad authority to require corrective action and other appropriate activities under RCRA Section 7003. Under RCRA Section 7003, EPA has the ability to waive both the requirement to obtain a permit and the substantive requirements that would be imposed through permits. When EPA uses RCRA Section 7003, however, the Agency seldom uses RCRA Section 7003 to waive substantive requirements. In rare situations where substantive requirements are waived, the Agency would impose alternative requirements (e.g, waste treatment or storage requirements) as necessary to ensure protection of human health and the environment. EPA may issue RCRA Section 7003 orders at, among other sites, facilities that have been issued RCRA permits and facilities that are authorized to operate under RCRA interim status. In discussing the use of 7003 orders, where other permit authorities are available to abate potential endangerments, EPA generally encourages use of those other permit authorities (e.g., 3005(c)(3) omnibus permitting authority) rather than RCRA Section 7003. Similarly, if RCRA Section 3008(h) or RCRA Section 3013 authority is available, EPA generally encourages use of these authorities rather than RCRA Section 7003. If permit authorities or non-RCRA Section 7003 enforcement authorities are inadequate, cannot be used to address the potential endangerment in a timely manner, or are otherwise inappropriate for the potential endangerment at issue, use of RCRA Section 7003 should be considered. See, "Guidance on the Use of Section 7003 of RCRA," U.S. EPA, Office of Enforcement and Compliance Assurance, October 1997.

In 1987, EPA issued guidance indicating that RCRA-authorized states with state waiver authorities comparable to CERCLA 121(e) or RCRA Section 7003 could use those state waiver authorities to waive RCRA requirements as long as the state did so in a manner no less stringent than that allowed under the corresponding Federal authorities. These waivers are most often used, as are the Federal waivers, to obviate the need to obtain a RCRA permit, rather than to eliminate substantive requirements. See, EPA guidance memo from J. Winston Porter to EPA Regional Administrators, "RCRA Permit Requirements for State Superfund Actions," November 16, 1987, OSWER Directive 9522.00-2.

Exemption from 40 CFR Part 264 Requirements for People Engaged in the Immediate Phase of a Spill Response. Regulations at 40 CFR 264.1(g)(8) provide that people engaged in treatment or containment activities are not subject to the requirements of 40 CFR part 264 if the activities are carried out during immediate response to: (1) a discharge of hazardous waste; (2) an imminent and substantial threat of a discharge of hazardous waste; (3) a discharge of a materials which, when discharged, becomes a hazardous waste; or, (4) an immediate threat to human health, public safety, property or the environment from the known or suspected presence of military munitions, other explosive material, or an explosive device. This means

[2] Note that, under certain circumstances, substantive requirements may be waived using CERCLA. See the ARAR waiver provisions at 40 CFR 300.430(f)(1)(ii)(C).

that, during the immediate phase of a spill response, hazardous waste management activities do not require hazardous waste permits (or interim status) and hazardous waste management units used during immediate response actions are not subject to RCRA design, operating, closure or post-closure requirements.

Of course, if hazardous waste treatment activities or other hazardous waste management activities continue after the immediate phase of a spill response is over, all applicable hazardous waste management and permitting requirements would apply. In addition, if spills occur at a facility that is already regulated under 40 CFR part 264, the facility owner/operator must continue to comply with all applicable requirements of 40 CFR Part 264 Subparts C (preparedness and prevention) and D (contingency plan and emergency procedures). See regulations at 40 CFR 260.1(g) and associated preamble discussion at 45 FR 76626 (November 19, 1980). See also, Sept. 29, 1986 memo from J. Winston Porter (EPA Assistant Administrator) to Fred Hansen interpreting the 40 CFR 264.1(g) regulations.

Changes During Interim Status to Comply with Corrective Action Requirements. Under regulations at 40 CFR 270.72(a)(5), an owner or operator of an interim status facility may make changes to provide for treatment, storage and disposal of remediation wastes in accordance with an interim status corrective action order issued by EPA under RCRA Section 3008(h) or other Federal authority, by an authorized state under comparable state authority, or by a court in a judicial action brought by EPA or an authorized state. These changes are limited to treatment, storage and disposal of remediation waste managed as a result of corrective action for releases at the facility in question; however, they are exempt from the reconstruction ban under 40 CFR 270.72(b). Under this provision, for example, EPA could approve a corrective action management unit for treatment of remediation waste using a 3008(h) order (or an authorized state could approve a CAMU using a similar state authority), even if that unit would otherwise amount to "reconstruction." Of course, units added at interim status facilities in accordance with this provision must meet all applicable unit requirements; for example, in the case of a CAMU, the CAMU requirements apply. See, regulations at 40 CFR 270.72(a)(5) promulgated March 7, 1989 and associated preamble discussion at 54 FR 9599.

Emergency Permits. In the event of an imminent and substantial endangerment to human health or the environment, EPA, or an authorized state, may issue a temporary emergency permit for treatment, storage or disposal of hazardous waste. Emergency permits may allow treatment, storage or disposal of hazardous waste at a non-permitted facility or at a permitted facility for waste not covered by the permit. Emergency permits may be oral or written. (If oral, they must be followed within five days by a written emergency permit.) Emergency permits must specify the hazardous wastes to be received and managed and the manner and location of their treatment, storage and disposal. Emergency permits may apply for up to ninety days, but may be terminated at any point if EPA, or an authorized state, determines that termination is appropriate to protect human health or the environment. Emergency permits must be accompanied by a public notice that meets the requirements of 40 CFR 124.10(b), including the name and address of the office approving the emergency permit, the name and location of the hazardous waste

treatment, storage or disposal facility, a brief description of the wastes involved, the actions authorized and the reason for the authorization, and the duration of the emergency permit.

Emergency permits are exempt from all other requirements of 40 CFR part 270 and part 124; however, to the extent possible and not inconsistent with the emergency situation, they must incorporate all otherwise applicable requirements of 40 CFR part 270 and parts 264 and 266.

See, regulations at 40 CFR 270.61, originally promulgated as 40 CFR 122.27 on May 19, 1987 (45 FR 33326). EPA has also written a number of letters interpreting the emergency permit regulations, see, for example, November 3, 1992 letter to Mark Hansen, Environmental Products and Services Inc., from Sylvia Lowrance, Director Office of Solid Waste (available in the RCRA Permit Policy Compendium).

Temporary Authorizations at Permitted Facilities. Under regulations at 40 CFR 270.42(e), EPA, or an authorized state, may temporarily authorize a permittee for an activity that would be the subject of a class two or three permit modification in order to, among other things, facilitate timely implementation of closure or corrective action activities. Activities approved using a temporary authorization must comply with applicable requirements of 40 CFR part 264. Temporary authorizations are limited to 180 days, with an opportunity for an extension of 180 additional days. To obtain an extension of a temporary authorization, a permittee must have requested a class two or three permit modification for the activity covered in the temporary authorization. Public notification of temporary authorizations is accomplished by the permittee sending a notice about the temporary authorization to all persons on the facility mailing list and to appropriate state and local governments. See regulations at 40 CFR 270.42, promulgated on September 28, 1988, and associated preamble at 53 FR 37919.

Regulations and Policies that Apply to Contaminated Environmental Media Only

Contained-in policy. Contaminated environmental media, of itself, is not hazardous waste and, generally, is not subject to regulation under RCRA. Contaminated environmental media can become subject to regulation under RCRA if they "contain" hazardous waste. As discussed more fully below, EPA generally considers contaminated environmental media to contain hazardous waste: (1) when they exhibit a characteristic of hazardous waste; or, (2) when they are contaminated with concentrations of hazardous constituents from listed hazardous waste that are above health-based levels.

If contaminated environmental media contain hazardous waste, they are subject to all applicable RCRA requirements until they no longer contain hazardous waste. EPA considers contaminated environmental media to no longer contain hazardous waste: (1) when they no longer exhibit a characteristic of hazardous waste; and (2) when concentrations of hazardous constituents from listed hazardous wastes are below health-based levels. Generally, contaminated environmental media that do not (or no longer) contain hazardous waste are not subject to any RCRA requirements; however, as discussed below, in some circumstances,

contaminated environmental media that contained hazardous waste when first generated (i.e., first removed from the land, or area of contamination) remain subject to LDR treatment requirements even after they "no longer contain" hazardous waste.

The determination that any given volume of contaminated media does not contain hazardous waste is called a "contained-in determination." In the case of media that exhibit a characteristic of hazardous waste, the media are considered to "contain" hazardous waste for as long as they exhibit a characteristic. Once the characteristic is eliminated (e.g., through treatment), the media are no longer considered to "contain" hazardous waste. Since this determination can be made through relatively straightforward analytical testing, no formal "contained-in" determination by EPA or an authorized state is required. Just like determinations about whether waste has been adequately decharacterized, generators of contaminated media may make independent determinations as to whether the media exhibit a characteristic of hazardous waste. In the case of media that are contaminated by listed hazardous waste, current EPA guidance recommends that contained-in determinations be made based on direct exposure using a reasonable maximum exposure scenario and that conservative, health-based, standards be used to develop the site-specific health-based levels of hazardous constituents below which contaminated environmental media would be considered to no longer contain hazardous waste. Since this determination involves development of site-specific health-based levels, the approval of EPA or an authorized state is required.

In certain circumstances the, RCRA land disposal restrictions will continue to apply to contaminated media that has been determined not to contain hazardous waste. This is the case when contaminated media contain hazardous waste when they are first generated (i.e., removed from the land, or area of contamination) and are subsequently determined to no longer contain hazardous waste (e.g., after treatment), but still contain hazardous constituents at concentrations above land disposal restriction treatment standards. It is also the case when media are contaminated as a result of disposal of untreated (or insufficiently treated) listed hazardous waste after the effective date of an applicable LDR treatment requirement. Of course, if no land disposal will occur (e.g., the media will be legitimately recycled) the LDR treatment standards do not apply. In addition, contaminated environmental media determined not to contain any waste (i.e., it is just media, it does not contain solid or hazardous waste) would not be subject to any RCRA Subtitle C requirements, including the LDRs, regardless of the time of the "contained-in" determination.

The contained-in policy was first articulated in a November 13, 1986 EPA memorandum, "RCRA Regulatory Status of Contaminated Groundwater." It has been updated many times in Federal Register preambles, EPA memos and correspondence, see, e.g., 53 FR 31138, 31142, 31148 (Aug. 17, 1988), 57 FR 21450, 21453 (May 20, 1992), and detailed discussion in HWIR-Media proposal preamble, 61 FR 18795 (April 29, 1996). A detailed discussion of the continuing requirement that some soils which have been determined to no longer contain hazardous waste (but still contain solid waste) comply with land disposal treatment standards can be found in the HWIR-Media proposal preamble, 61 FR 18804; the September 15, 1996 letter

from Michael Shapiro (EPA OSW Director) to Peter C. Wright (Monsanto Company); and the preamble to the LDR Phase IV rule, 63 FR 28617 (May 26, 1998).

Note that the contained-in policy applies only to environmental media (soil, ground water, surface water and sediments) and debris. The contained-in policy for environmental media has not been codified. As discussed below, the contained-in policy for hazardous debris was codified in 1992.

RCRA Section 3020(b) Exemption for Reinjection of Contaminated Ground Water. Under RCRA Section 3020(a), disposal of hazardous waste into or above a formation that contains an underground source of drinking water is generally prohibited. RCRA Section 3020(b) provides an exception for underground injection carried out in connection with certain remediation activities. Under RCRA Section 3020(b), injection of contaminated ground water back into the aquifer from which it was withdrawn is allowed if: (1) such injection is conducted as part of a response action under Section 104 or 106 of CERCLA or a RCRA corrective action intended to clean up such contamination; (2) the contaminated ground water is treated to substantially reduce hazardous constituents prior to reinjection; and, (3) the response action or corrective action will, on completion, be sufficient to protect human health and the environment. Approval of reinjection under RCRA Section 3020(b) can be included in approval of other cleanup activities, for example, as part of approval of a RCRA Statement of Basis or CERCLA Record of Decision. See, RCRA Section 3020(b), established as part of the 1984 HSWA amendments. See also, OSWER Directive 9234.1-06, "Applicable of Land Disposal Restrictions to RCRA and CERCLA Ground Water Treatment Reinjection Superfund Management Review: Recommendation No. 26," November 27, 1989.

LDR Treatment Standards for Contaminated Soils. On May 26, 1998, EPA promulgated land disposal restriction treatment standards specific to contaminated soils.[3] These treatment standards require that contaminated soils which will be land disposed be treated to reduce concentrations of hazardous constituents by 90 percent or meet hazardous constituent concentrations that are ten times the universal treatment standards (UTS), whichever is greater. (This is typically referred to as 90% capped by 10xUTS.) For contaminated soil that exhibits a characteristic of ignitable, reactive or corrosive hazardous waste, treatment must also eliminate the hazardous characteristic.

The soil treatment standards apply to all underlying hazardous constituents[4] reasonably expected to be present in any given volume of contaminated soil when such constituents are found at initial concentrations greater than ten times the UTS. For soil that exhibits a

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[3] This rule, which also addresses a number of non-soil issues, has been challenged by a number of parties. To date, the parties have filed non-binding statements of issues only; however, based on those statements, it appears that, with the exception of the requirement that PCBs be included as an underlying hazardous constituent which has been challenged for both soil and non-soil wastes, the soil treatment standards are not included in the challenges.

[4] Except fluoride, selenium, sulfides, vanadium and zinc.

characteristic of toxic, ignitable, reactive or corrosive hazardous waste, treatment is also required for: (1) in the case of the toxicity characteristic, the characteristic constituent; and, (2) in the case of ignitability, reactivity or corrosivity, the characteristic property. Although treatment is required for each underlying hazardous constituent, it is not necessary to monitor soil for the entire list of underlying hazardous constituents. Generators of contaminated soil can reasonably apply knowledge of the likely contaminants present and use that knowledge to select appropriate underlying hazardous constituents, or classes of constituents, for monitoring. As with the LDR treatment standards for hazardous debris (discussed below), generators of contaminated soil may use either the applicable universal treatment standards for the contaminating hazardous waste or the soil treatment standards.

See, soil treatment standard regulations at 40 CFR 268.49, promulgated May 26, 1998 and associated preamble discussion at 63 FR 28602-28622.

Note that the soil treatment standards supersede the historic presumption that an LDR treatment variance is appropriate for contaminated soil. LDR treatment variances are still available for contaminated soil, provided the generator can show that an otherwise applicable treatment standard (i.e., the soil treatment standard) is unachieveable or inappropriate, as discussed above, or can show that a site-specific, risk-based treatment variance is proper, as discussed below.

Site-Specific, Risk-Based LDR Treatment Variance for Contaminated Soils. On May 26, 1998, EPA promulgated a new land disposal restriction treatment variance specific to contaminated soil. Under 40 CFR 268.44(h)(3), variances from otherwise applicable LDR treatment standards may be approved if it is determined that compliance with the treatment standards would result in treatment beyond the point at which short- and long-term threats to human health and the environment are minimized. This allows a site-specific, risk-based determination to supersede the technology-based LDR treatment standards under certain circumstances.

Alternative land disposal restriction treatment standards established through site specific, risk-based minimize threat variances should be within the range of values the Agency generally finds acceptable for risk-based cleanup levels. That is, for carcinogens, alternative treatment standards should ensure constituent concentrations that result in the total excess risk to an individual exposed over a lifetime generally falling within a range from 10^{-4} to 10^{-6}, using 10^{-6} as a point of departure and with a preference for achieving the more protective end of the risk range. For non-carcinogenic effects, alternative treatment standards should ensure constituent concentrations that an individual could be exposed to on a daily basis without appreciable risk of deleterious effect during a lifetime; in general, the hazard index should not exceed one (1). Constituent concentrations that achieve these levels should be calculated based on a reasonable maximum exposure scenario -- that is, based on an analysis of both the current and reasonable expected future land uses, with exposure parameters chosen based on a reasonable assessment of the maximum exposure that might occur; however, alternative LDR treatment standards may not

be based on consideration of post-land disposal controls such as caps or other barriers.

See, regulations at 40 CFR 268.44(h)(4), promulgated May 26, 1998 and associated preamble discussion at 63 FR 28606-28608.

Regulations and Policies that Apply Only to Debris

LDR Treatment Standards for Contaminated Debris. In 1992, EPA established land disposal restriction treatment standards specific to hazardous contaminated debris. The debris-specific treatment standards established by these regulations are based on application of common extraction, destruction, and containment debris treatment technologies and are expressed as specific technologies rather than numeric criteria. As with the contaminated soil treatment standards discussed earlier, generators of hazardous contaminated debris may choose between meeting either the debris treatment standards or the numerical treatment standard promulgated for the contaminating hazardous waste. See, regulations at 40 CFR 268.45, promulgated August 18, 1992, and associated preamble discussion at 57 FR 37194 and 27221.

Interpretation that Debris Treated to the LDR Debris Treatment Standards Using Extraction or Destruction Technologies no Longer Contain Hazardous Waste. With the land disposal restriction treatment standards for hazardous contaminated debris, in 1992, EPA determined that hazardous debris treated to comply with the debris treatment standards using one of the identified extraction or destruction technologies would be considered no longer to contain hazardous waste and would, therefore, no longer be subject to regulation under RCRA, provided the debris do not exhibit any of the hazardous waste characteristics. This "contained-in determination" is automatic; no agency action is needed. Note that this automatic contained-in determination does not apply to debris treated to the debris treatment standards using one of the identified immobilization technologies. See, regulations at 40 CFR 261.3(f) and treatment standards at Table 1 of 40 CFR 268.45, promulgated August 18, 1992, and associated preamble discussion at 51 FR 37225.

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