

## § 300.415

## 40 CFR Ch. I (7–1–23 Edition)

(2) If such a release of a CWA hazardous substance has occurred, the OSC shall determine whether the release results in a substantial threat to the public health or welfare of the United States. Factors to be considered by the OSC in making this determination include, but are not limited to, the size of the release, the character of the release, and the nature of the threat to public health or welfare of the United States. Upon obtaining relevant elements of such information, the OSC shall conduct an evaluation of the threat posed, based on the OSC's experience in assessing other releases, and consultation with senior lead agency officials and readily available authorities on issues outside the OSC's technical expertise.

(f) A removal site evaluation shall be terminated when the OSC or lead agency determines:

(1) There is no release;

(2) The source is neither a vessel nor a facility as defined in § 300.5 of the NCP;

(3) The release involves neither a hazardous substance, nor a pollutant or contaminant that may present an imminent and substantial danger to public health or welfare of the United States;

(4) The release consists of a situation specified in § 300.400(b)(1) through (3) subject to limitations on response;

(5) The amount, quantity, or concentration released does not warrant federal response;

(6) A party responsible for the release, or any other person, is providing appropriate response, and on-scene monitoring by the government is not required; or

(7) The removal site evaluation is completed.

(g) The results of the removal site evaluation shall be documented.

(h) The OSC or lead agency shall ensure that natural resource trustees are promptly notified in order that they may initiate appropriate actions, including those identified in subpart G of this part. The OSC or lead agency shall coordinate all response activities with such affected trustees.

(i) If the removal site evaluation indicates that removal action under § 300.415 is not required, but that reme-

dial action under § 300.430 may be necessary, the lead agency shall, as appropriate, initiate a remedial site evaluation pursuant to § 300.420.

[59 FR 47448, Sept. 15, 1994]

### § 300.415 Removal action.

(a)(1) In determining the appropriate extent of action to be taken in response to a given release, the lead agency shall first review the removal site evaluation, any information produced through a remedial site evaluation, if any has been done previously, and the current site conditions, to determine if removal action is appropriate.

(2) Where the responsible parties are known, an effort initially shall be made, to the extent practicable, to determine whether they can and will perform the necessary removal action promptly and properly.

(3) This section does not apply to removal actions taken pursuant to section 104(b) of CERCLA. The criteria for such actions are set forth in section 104(b) of CERCLA.

(b)(1) At any release, regardless of whether the site is included on the National Priorities List (NPL), where the lead agency makes the determination, based on the factors in paragraph (b)(2) of this section, that there is a threat to public health or welfare of the United States or the environment, the lead agency may take any appropriate removal action to abate, prevent, minimize, stabilize, mitigate, or eliminate the release or the threat of release.

(2) The following factors shall be considered in determining the appropriateness of a removal action pursuant to this section:

(i) Actual or potential exposure to nearby human populations, animals, or the food chain from hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants;

(ii) Actual or potential contamination of drinking water supplies or sensitive ecosystems;

(iii) Hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants in drums, barrels, tanks, or other bulk storage containers, that may pose a threat of release;

(iv) High levels of hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants

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in soils largely at or near the surface, that may migrate;

(v) Weather conditions that may cause hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants to migrate or be released;

(vi) Threat of fire or explosion;

(vii) The availability of other appropriate federal or state response mechanisms to respond to the release; and

(viii) Other situations or factors that may pose threats to public health or welfare of the United States or the environment.

(3) If the lead agency determines that a removal action is appropriate, actions shall, as appropriate, begin as soon as possible to abate, prevent, minimize, stabilize, mitigate, or eliminate the threat to public health or welfare of the United States or the environment. The lead agency shall, at the earliest possible time, also make any necessary determinations pursuant to paragraph (b)(4) of this section.

(4) Whenever a planning period of at least six months exists before on-site activities must be initiated, and the lead agency determines, based on a site evaluation, that a removal action is appropriate:

(i) The lead agency shall conduct an engineering evaluation/cost analysis (EE/CA) or its equivalent. The EE/CA is an analysis of removal alternatives for a site.

(ii) If environmental samples are to be collected, the lead agency shall develop sampling and analysis plans that shall provide a process for obtaining data of sufficient quality and quantity to satisfy data needs. Sampling and analysis plans shall be reviewed and approved by EPA. The sampling and analysis plans shall consist of two parts:

(A) The field sampling plan, which describes the number, type, and location of samples and the type of analyses; and

(B) The quality assurance project plan, which describes policy, organization, and functional activities and the data quality objectives and measures necessary to achieve adequate data for use in planning and documenting the removal action.

(5) CERCLA fund-financed removal actions, other than those authorized

under section 104(b) of CERCLA, shall be terminated after \$2 million has been obligated for the action or 12 months have elapsed from the date that removal activities begin on-site, unless the lead agency determines that:

(i) There is an immediate risk to public health or welfare of the United States or the environment; continued response actions are immediately required to prevent, limit, or mitigate an emergency; and such assistance will not otherwise be provided on a timely basis; or

(ii) Continued response action is otherwise appropriate and consistent with the remedial action to be taken.

(c)(1) In carrying out a response to a release of a CWA hazardous substance, as described in CWA section 311(c)(1), as amended by OPA section 4201(a), the OSC may:

(i) Remove or arrange for the removal of a release, and mitigate or prevent a substantial threat of a release, at any time;

(ii) Direct or monitor all federal, state, and private actions to remove a release; and

(iii) Remove and, if necessary, destroy a vessel releasing or threatening to release CWA hazardous substances, by whatever means are available.

(2) If the investigation by the OSC under § 300.410 shows that the release of a CWA hazardous substance results in a substantial threat to public health or welfare of the United States, the OSC shall direct all federal, state, or private actions to remove the release or to mitigate or prevent the threat of such a release, as appropriate. In directing the response, the OSC may act without regard to any other provision of law governing contracting procedures or employment of personnel by the federal government to:

(i) Remove or arrange for the removal of the release;

(ii) Mitigate or prevent the substantial threat of the release; and

(iii) Remove and, if necessary, destroy a vessel releasing, or threatening to release, by whatever means are available.

(3) In the case of a release of a CWA hazardous substance posing a substantial threat to public health or welfare of the United States, the OSC shall:

(i) Assess opportunities for the use of various special teams and other assistance described in §300.145, as appropriate;

(ii) Request immediate activation of the RRT; and

(iii) Take whatever additional response actions are deemed appropriate. When requested by the OSC, the lead agency or RRT shall dispatch appropriate personnel to the scene of the release to assist the OSC. This assistance may include technical support in the agency's areas of expertise and disseminating information to the public in accordance with §300.155. The lead agency shall ensure that a contracting officer is available on-scene, at the request of the OSC.

(d) Removal actions shall, to the extent practicable, contribute to the efficient performance of any anticipated long-term remedial action with respect to the release concerned.

(e) The following removal actions are, as a general rule, appropriate in the types of situations shown; however, this list is not exhaustive and is not intended to prevent the lead agency from taking any other actions deemed necessary under CERCLA, CWA section 311, or other appropriate federal or state enforcement or response authorities, and the list does not create a duty on the lead agency to take action at any particular time:

(1) Fences, warning signs, or other security or site control precautions—where humans or animals have access to the release;

(2) Drainage controls, for example, run-off or run-on diversion—where needed to reduce migration of hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants off-site or to prevent precipitation or run-off from other sources, for example, flooding, from entering the release area from other areas;

(3) Stabilization of berms, dikes, or impoundments or drainage or closing of lagoons—where needed to maintain the integrity of the structures;

(4) Capping of contaminated soils or sludges—where needed to reduce migration of hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants into soil, ground or surface water, or air;

(5) Using chemicals and other materials to retard the spread of the release or to mitigate its effects—where the use of such chemicals will reduce the spread of the release;

(6) Excavation, consolidation, or removal of highly contaminated soils from drainage or other areas—where such actions will reduce the spread of, or direct contact with, the contamination;

(7) Removal of drums, barrels, tanks, or other bulk containers that contain or may contain hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants—where it will reduce the likelihood of spillage; leakage; exposure to humans, animals, or food chain; or fire or explosion;

(8) Containment, treatment, disposal, or incineration of hazardous materials—where needed to reduce the likelihood of human, animal, or food chain exposure; or

(9) Provision of alternative water supply—where necessary immediately to reduce exposure to contaminated household water and continuing until such time as local authorities can satisfy the need for a permanent remedy.

(f) Where necessary to protect public health or welfare, the lead agency shall request that FEMA conduct a temporary relocation or that state/local officials conduct an evacuation.

(g) If the lead agency determines that the removal action will not fully address the threat posed by the release and the release may require remedial action, the lead agency shall ensure an orderly transition from removal to remedial response activities.

(h) CERCLA removal actions conducted by states under cooperative agreements, described in subpart F of this part, shall comply with all requirements of this section.

(i) Facilities operated by a state or political subdivision at the time of disposal require a state cost share of at least 50 percent of Fund-financed response costs if a Fund-financed remedial action is conducted.

(j) Fund-financed removal actions under CERCLA section 104 and removal actions pursuant to CERCLA section 106 shall, to the extent practicable considering the exigencies of the situation, attain applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements (ARARs) under

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federal environmental or state environmental or facility siting laws. Waivers described in § 300.430(f)(1)(ii)(C) may be used for removal actions. Other federal and state advisories, criteria, or guidance may, as appropriate, be considered in formulating the removal action (see § 300.400(g)(3)). In determining whether compliance with ARARs is practicable, the lead agency may consider appropriate factors, including:

- (1) The urgency of the situation; and
- (2) The scope of the removal action to be conducted.

(k) Removal actions pursuant to section 106 or 122 of CERCLA are not subject to the following requirements of this section:

(1) Section 300.415(a)(2) requirement to locate responsible parties and have them undertake the response;

(2) Section 300.415(b)(2)(vii) requirement to consider the availability of other appropriate federal or state response and enforcement mechanisms to respond to the release;

(3) Section 300.415(b)(5) requirement to terminate response after \$2 million has been obligated or 12 months have elapsed from the date of the initial response; and

(4) Section 300.415(g) requirement to assure an orderly transition from removal to remedial action.

(1) To the extent practicable, provision for post-removal site control following a CERCLA Fund-financed removal action at both NPL and non-NPL sites is encouraged to be made prior to the initiation of the removal action. Such post-removal site control includes actions necessary to ensure the effectiveness and integrity of the removal action after the completion of the on-site removal action or after the \$2 million or 12-month statutory limits are reached for sites that do not meet the exemption criteria in paragraph (b)(5) of this section. Post-removal site control may be conducted by:

(1) The affected state or political subdivision thereof or local units of government for any removal;

(2) Potentially responsible parties; or

(3) EPA's remedial program for some federal-lead Fund-financed responses at NPL sites.

(m) OSCs/RPMs conducting removal actions shall submit OSC reports to the RRT as required by § 300.165.

(n) *Community relations in removal actions.* (1) In the case of all CERCLA removal actions taken pursuant to § 300.415 or CERCLA enforcement actions to compel removal response, a spokesperson shall be designated by the lead agency. The spokesperson shall inform the community of actions taken, respond to inquiries, and provide information concerning the release. All news releases or statements made by participating agencies shall be coordinated with the OSC/RPM. The spokesperson shall notify, at a minimum, immediately affected citizens, state and local officials, and, when appropriate, civil defense or emergency management agencies.

(2) For CERCLA actions where, based on the site evaluation, the lead agency determines that a removal is appropriate, and that less than six months exists before on-site removal activity must begin, the lead agency shall:

(i) Publish a notice of availability of the administrative record file established pursuant to § 300.820 in a major local newspaper of general circulation or use one or more other mechanisms to give adequate notice to a community within 60 days of initiation of on-site removal activity;

(ii) Provide a public comment period, as appropriate, of not less than 30 days from the time the administrative record file is made available for public inspection, pursuant to § 300.820(b)(2); and

(iii) Prepare a written response to significant comments pursuant to § 300.820(b)(3).

(3) For CERCLA removal actions where on-site action is expected to extend beyond 120 days from the initiation of on-site removal activities, the lead agency shall by the end of the 120-day period:

(i) Conduct interviews with local officials, community residents, public interest groups, or other interested or affected parties, as appropriate, to solicit their concerns, information needs, and how or when citizens would like to be involved in the Superfund process;

(ii) Prepare a formal community relations plan (CRP) based on the community interviews and other relevant information, specifying the community relations activities that the lead agency expects to undertake during the response; and

(iii) Establish at least one local information repository at or near the location of the response action. The information repository should contain items made available for public information. Further, an administrative record file established pursuant to subpart I for all removal actions shall be available for public inspection in at least one of the repositories. The lead agency shall inform the public of the establishment of the information repository and provide notice of availability of the administrative record file for public review. All items in the repository shall be available for public inspection and copying.

(4) Where, based on the site evaluation, the lead agency determines that a CERCLA removal action is appropriate and that a planning period of at least six months exists prior to initiation of the on-site removal activities, the lead agency shall at a minimum:

(i) Comply with the requirements set forth in paragraphs (n)(3)(i), (ii), and (iii) of this section, prior to the completion of the EE/CA, or its equivalent, except that the information repository and the administrative record file will be established no later than when the EE/CA approval memorandum is signed;

(ii) Publish a notice of availability and brief description of the EE/CA in a major local newspaper of general circulation or use one or more other mechanisms to give adequate notice to a community pursuant to § 300.820;

(iii) Provide a reasonable opportunity, not less than 30 calendar days, for submission of written and oral comments after completion of the EE/CA pursuant to § 300.820(a). Upon timely request, the lead agency will extend the public comment period by a minimum of 15 days; and

(iv) Prepare a written response to significant comments pursuant to § 300.820(a).

[59 FR 47448, Sept. 15, 1994, as amended at 80 FR 17706, Apr. 2, 2015]

**§ 300.420 Remedial site evaluation.**

(a) *General.* The purpose of this section is to describe the methods, procedures, and criteria the lead agency shall use to collect data, as required, and evaluate releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants. The evaluation may consist of two steps: a remedial preliminary assessment (PA) and a remedial site inspection (SI).

(b) *Remedial preliminary assessment.* (1) The lead agency shall perform a remedial PA on all sites entered into the SEMS remedial assessment active inventory as defined in § 300.5 to:

(i) Eliminate from further consideration those sites that pose no threat to public health or the environment;

(ii) Determine if there is any potential need for removal action;

(iii) Set priorities for site inspections; and

(iv) Gather existing data to facilitate later evaluation of the release pursuant to the Hazard Ranking System (HRS) if warranted.

(2) A remedial PA shall consist of a review of existing information about a release such as information on the pathways of exposure, exposure targets, and source and nature of release. A remedial PA shall also include an off-site reconnaissance as appropriate. A remedial PA may include an on-site reconnaissance where appropriate.

(3) If the remedial PA indicates that a removal action may be warranted, the lead agency shall initiate removal evaluation pursuant to § 300.410.

(4) In performing a remedial PA, the lead agency may complete the EPA Preliminary Assessment form, available from EPA regional offices, or its equivalent, and shall prepare a PA report, which shall include:

(i) A description of the release;

(ii) A description of the probable nature of the release; and

(iii) A recommendation on whether further action is warranted, which lead agency should conduct further action, and whether an SI or removal action or both should be undertaken.

(5) Any person may petition the lead federal agency (EPA or the appropriate federal agency in the case of a release or suspected release from a federal facility), to perform a PA of a release