



Superfund and You - *The FS Evaluation Criteria*

In the last two columns, we discussed the Remedial Investigation (RI), Baseline Risk Assessment (BRA), and Feasibility Study (FS). These processes are used by EPA to identify the nature and extent of contamination in Libby, assess its risks to human health, evaluate cleanup options and identify a preferred cleanup alternative.

In evaluating the cleanup alternatives at all Superfund sites, EPA uses a specific set of nine criteria (called the *NCP Criteria*) that ask the following questions about each alternative:

1. **Overall protection of human health and the environment.** *Is it protective? How are risks eliminated, reduced, or controlled?*
2. **Compliance with ARARs.** *Does it meet environmental laws or provide grounds for a waiver?*
3. **Long-term effectiveness and permanence.** *Does it provide reliable protection over time?*
4. **Reduction of toxicity, mobility, or volume through treatment.** *Does it use a treatment technology? This is preferred, if possible.*
5. **Short-term effectiveness.** *Will the remedy be implemented fast enough to address short-term risks, and will there be adverse effects (human health or environmental) during construction/implementation?*
6. **Implementability.** *How difficult will it be to implement (e.g. availability of materials or coordination of Federal, State, and local agencies)?*

7. **Cost Effectiveness.** *What are the estimated capital and operation and maintenance costs in comparison to other, equally-protective alternatives?*

8. **State acceptance.** *Does the State agree with, oppose, or have no comment on it?*

9. **Community acceptance.** *Does the community support, have reservations about, or oppose it?*

Criteria 1 and 2 are *threshold criteria* and must be satisfied for an alternative to be eligible. Criteria 3 through 7 are *primary balancing criteria* and are used to weigh major trade-offs among the alternatives that meet the threshold criteria. Alternatives that pass these first seven criteria are systematically compared against one another to determine relative strengths and weaknesses. This produces a preferred alternative, which will be set forth by EPA in the Proposed Plan (available for public comment).

Criteria 8 and 9 are *modifying criteria* and are implemented once all public comments are evaluated. They may prompt modifications to the preferred alternative. The end result is a preferred alternative for cleanup in which EPA and the community can be confident.

For More Information...

EPA and our contractor, CDM, will be happy to provide 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).

Published February 26, 2006