

Regulatory Database Descriptions

Overview

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Databases

National Priorities List: The National Priorities List (NPL) is a database of EPA's highest priority uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites identified for possible long-term remedial action under Comprehensive Environmental Response Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA). Superfund sites with a Hazardous Ranking System (HRS) score of 28.5 or greater are placed on the NPL list. A site must be on the NPL to receive money from the trust fund (Superfund) for remedial action. NPL sites are eligible for clean up at federal expense if the responsible parties cannot be identified or no longer exist. The NPL list is required to be updated once a year and published in the *Federal Register*.

Comprehensive, Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Information System (CERCLIS): A database of sites previously or currently under investigation by EPA for potential hazardous substance contamination and possible inclusion on NPL. CERCLIS provides data on active sites from points of discovery to listing on NPL through completion of remedial and response actions. There is no guarantee that CERCLIS contains all existing potential hazardous sites. Updated quarterly, information in this database includes name, alias, location, and NPL status. The Office of Emergency and Remedial Response of EPA also maintains an archive list of the No Further Remedial Action Planned (NFRAP) sites that are not active or have been removed from CERCLIS. The CERCLIS list should be used in conjunction with NPL, since it may not contain all site status updates.

Resource Conservation and Recovery Information System (RCRIS): A database of hazardous waste handlers regulated under the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA). All hazardous waste handlers (generators; treatment, storage and disposal facilities [TSDFs] and transporters) are required to notify EPA. TSDFs are also required to submit more detailed information concerning wastes handled, Standard Industrial Code (SIC) and process data. Information in the database includes facility address, permit and closure. RCRA Administrative Action Tracing System (RAATS) is a database that contains violations, evaluations and enforcement information. Information ranges from evaluations of a site to administrative orders requiring corrective action of an illegal activity.

National Response Center (NRC): The sole federal point of contact for reporting oil and chemical spills. NRC maintains a computer database that contains the information on release notifications of oil and hazardous substances in the United States. Initial notification data may be updated with information from federal, state or local response authorities. The United States, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and Guam are covered in the database from 1987 to the present.

The quality of the data is occasionally limited and contains transcription errors or misspellings, since some of the reports are taken over the phone. Reports may also be submitted on line. Information protected for privacy purposes is also not available. NRC

data should not be used as the sole source of information about a release. All information in NRC should be checked against as many other sources as possible.

The completeness, accuracy, multiple notifications, multiple sources, data updates, entry errors, and data structure changes can affect the quality of NRC data. NRC primarily contains initial accounts of releases made during or immediately after an incident when exact details are often unknown. The data may not be updated unless an EPA region office is involved in the response action. Because the data may be gathered from many sources, multiple notifications of some releases may exist. These may or may not be exact duplicates. Large releases, in particular, are prone to multiple notifications.

Facility Registry System (FRS): A centrally managed database that identifies facilities, sites or places subject to environmental regulations or of environmental interest. FRS incorporates information from program national systems, state master facility records, data collected from EPA's Central Data Exchange registrations and data management personnel. FRS provides Internet access to a single integrated source of comprehensive (air, water and waste) environmental information about facilities, sites or places. EPA's Office of Information Collection in the Office of Environmental Information is the organization responsible for implementation and management of FRS.

Toxic Release Inventory System (TRIS): A database containing information about the release and transfer of more than 650 toxic chemicals and compounds by medium of release as required under SARA Title III Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) and Pollution Prevention Act (PPA). TRIS data has the following categories: facility identification, substance identification, environmental release of chemicals, waste treatment and off-site waste transfer. An updated database may not be available to the public until after 15 months from the year the data was collected.

Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) Databases

Files containing correspondence, maps, consultant reports and registration notices can be reviewed at TCEQ regional offices. Central records for the state can also be reviewed at the TCEQ main office in Austin.

Texas State Superfund Registry: In 1985, the Texas Legislature amended the Texas Solid Waste Disposal Act to create the State Superfund Program. The purpose of this program is to protect human health and the environment through remediation that includes removal, treatment or containment of wastes of abandoned hazardous sites. The federal and state superfund programs work together to identify and respond directly to hazardous sites in Texas. Unfortunately, funds are limited and only the highest ranking sites make the federal NPL. The state program addresses abandoned or inactive sites within the state that do not qualify for action under the federal program and cannot be remediated under the hazardous waste program or by other means. While modeled after the federal Superfund program, the state program does differ in the type of substances included, liability and appeals.

When the State Superfund Program was created in 1985, it applied only to hazardous wastes; however, the Texas Legislature modified the SWDA in 1989 to include releases of

hazardous substances. The rules for the State Superfund Program are contained in Subchapter K (Hazardous Substance Facilities Assessment and Remediation) of 30 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 335 (Industrial Solid Waste and Municipal Hazardous Waste).

Industrial Hazardous Waste Registration Database: TCEQ's Registration & Reporting Section, Registration, Review and Reporting Division, maintains an Industrial Hazardous Waste Registration database. Information contained in the database includes, among other information, names, and addresses, of the permitted hazardous waste facilities in Texas.

Municipal Solid Waste Landfill: All municipal solid waste facilities in Texas are classified according to the method of processing or disposal of municipal solid waste by TCEQ. Subject to the limitations, a municipal solid waste landfill (MSWLF) facility may also receive special wastes, including Class I industrial non-hazardous solid waste and hazardous waste from conditionally exempt small quantity generators, if properly handled and safeguarded in the landfill facility.

Petroleum Storage Tank Registration: Owners and operators of petroleum storage tanks are required to register and self-certify tank information with TCEQ. The Petroleum Storage Tank Registration or Registered Petroleum Storage Tank List contains registered aboveground and underground storage tanks in Texas. The list includes information such as the number of tanks, type of construction material, capacity, and facility location and owner information.

Leaking Petroleum Storage Tank: The Leaking Petroleum Storage Tank database contains facility information, status and priority on reported leaking petroleum storage tanks in Texas.

Voluntary Cleanup Database: Updated monthly, the Voluntary Cleanup Database contains pertinent information on all sites that are in the Voluntary Cleanup Program (VCP). Created by House Bill 2296, the Texas VCP was established on September 1, 1995 to provide administrative, technical, and legal incentives to encourage the cleanup of contaminated sites in Texas. Since future lenders and land owners receive protection from liability to the State of Texas for clean up of sites under VCP, most of the constraints for completing real estate transactions at those sites are eliminated. As a result, many unused or under used properties may be restored to economically productive or community beneficial uses. Also under this program, site cleanups follow a streamlined approach to reduce future human and environmental risk to safe levels.

Any site not subject to a TCEQ order or permit is eligible to enter VCP except in cases where agency enforcement action is pending. Upon acceptance of the application, the applicant must sign an agreement that describes the work schedule of events necessary to achieve clean up and the applicant agrees to pay all VCP oversight costs. After completion of the clean up, the parties will receive a certificate of completion from TCEQ that states that all lenders and future land owners who are not responsible parties are released from all liability to the state for cleanup of areas covered by the certificate. Parties may terminate their participation in the VCP at any time by written notice to the program.

Enforcement: In accordance with statute, the commission prepares an annual electronic report that will describe the enforcement actions for each type of regulatory program and includes: the number of inspections; the number of notices of violations; the number of enforcement actions; the type of enforcement actions; the amount of penalties assessed, deferred, or collected; and any other information the commission determines is relevant. The report is due by December 1st of each year and is made available to the general public via the TCEQ's web site.

Other

Abandoned Landfill Research: Commissioned by TCEQ, Texas State University has researched abandoned landfills using both geographic information system (GIS) and remote sensing. The results of the research found 4,165 abandoned and permitted landfills.

The closed landfill information has been provided to the local councils of government for their use regarding land development and future planning. Information from the closed landfill inventory is available at any local council of government. Hardcopy information can also be obtained, by mail or in person from TCEQ Records Services, phone 512/239-6204, fax 512/239-0888. Electronic data can be obtained by mail from TCEQ Customer Reports and Services, phone 512/239-3282, fax 512/239-0888.