

**DRAFT GUIDELINES
REMEDY SELECTION**

**MINNESOTA POLLUTION CONTROL AGENCY
SITE REMEDIATION SECTION
SEPTEMBER 1998**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This document is a component of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Superfund and Voluntary Investigation and Cleanup Programs (SF/VIC) "Risk-Based Site Evaluation Manual" for managing sites where releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants have occurred. Remedy selection is formally undertaken after characterization of soil and ground water contamination at a site has been completed, the risks to human health and the environment have been assessed, and it has been determined that an unacceptable risk exists and response actions are necessary.

Once it has been determined through risk-based decision-making that a remedy is needed to reduce risk to an acceptable level, remedy selection begins. Often this will occur very early in the investigative process or as soon as it is determined that an unacceptable risk is present. Information collected at the site from that point forward should focus on quantifying the risk and selecting a remedy acceptable to all interested parties.

As defined by the Minnesota Environmental Response and Liability Act (MERLA), all remedies must meet the threshold criterion of providing overall protection of public health, welfare, and the environment and consider the planned use of the property. With this in mind, the mission of the SF/VIC supports evaluation of potential remedies ranging from those that thoroughly destroy contaminants to those that include the use of engineering controls and/or institutional controls, depending upon site circumstances. The SF/VIC mission, as described in Section 2.0, was developed in an effort to effectively communicate the role of the SF/VIC programs and provide direction during the investigation and cleanup of contaminated land in Minnesota. Guidance is provided for assessing alternative remedies using the five balancing criteria: long-term effectiveness; implementability; short-term risk; cost effectiveness; and community acceptance.

Originally, remedy selection in the Superfund program was a "one-size-fits-all" process that included several phases of reporting and evaluation as outlined in the National Contingency Plan (NCP), 40 C.F.R. Part 300. Today the NCP-like approach to remedy is used at a relatively small number of sites and is referenced in this document as the "traditional remedy selection" approach. Remedy selection tailored to site-specific circumstances is referred to as "Streamlined Remedy Selection." This guidance is intended to provide the most appropriate approach to remedy selection based upon site specific circumstances.

The "Considerations" section of this document presents information on compliance with state and federal regulations and explores other issues that have historically slowed or complicated the remedy selection process. The section attempts to communicate specific remediation program policies on some of those issues. It also addresses areas where greater MPCA flexibility is now available. The final sections provide guidance on remedy planning, reporting, and tracking.

