



# Restoration Advisory Board Rule Handbook

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Office of the Secretary of Defense

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## Executive Summary

The Department of Defense (DoD) encourages community involvement in the environmental restoration process through Restoration Advisory Boards (RABs). Since 1994, RABs have been established at over 300 installations and properties in the United States and its territories to encourage communities and installations to identify and discuss potential environmental restoration issues. By facilitating open communication and understanding, RABs serve as the anchor to relationships among the parties involved in the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) at environmentally impacted sites and installations. RABs provide a collaborative forum for the community, government agencies, tribes, and installation decision makers to discuss and identify the most efficient and productive means to restore the environment.

DoD developed this handbook as an accompaniment to the RAB Rule, which was issued on May 12, 2006 (*71 Federal Register 27610*). The handbook is intended to supplement the rule. It is written to be flexible enough to guide individual RABs in addressing their own unique concerns and to offer suggestions to the communities and members involved in the RAB.

This handbook follows the structure of the RAB Rule using a question and answer format designed to serve as a quick reference manual for major topics that may be discussed by RABs and local communities. The RAB Handbook is composed of the following nine chapters:

1. What is a RAB?
2. How is a RAB established?
3. Who can participate in a RAB?
4. What are the roles and responsibilities of RAB participants?
5. How does a RAB operate?
6. How does a community or installation know when a RAB has completed its work and is no longer needed?
7. What happens if a RAB becomes ineffective?
8. Can an adjourned or dissolved RAB be reestablished?
9. What happens to RABs at installations that are closing or have been closed under BRAC?

Please refer to the RAB Rule for specific requirements of RABs. The rule may be found at: <https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/News/OSD/RAB/rabrule.html>.

## DENIX RAB Rule Web site



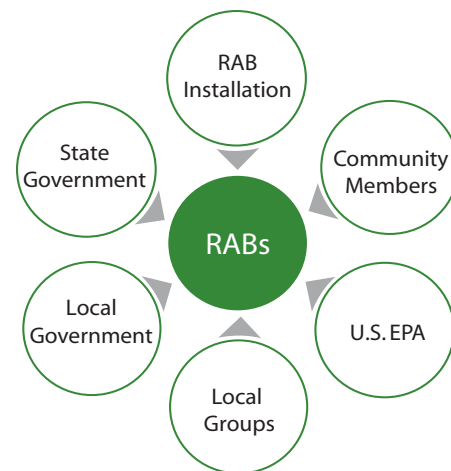
# 1 What is a Restoration Advisory Board?

Each military installation is part of a community, and actions the installation undertakes in environmental restoration may impact its neighbors. Environmental restoration on DoD installations requires local community input and exchange of information. A RAB provides a forum for this input and exchange at operating and closing installations. Additionally, having a RAB at an operational installation often helps to ease the concern that neighbors might feel when an installation is undergoing environmental restoration.

## What is a RAB?

A RAB is a stakeholder group that meets on a regular basis to discuss environmental restoration at a specific property that is either currently or was formerly owned by DoD, but where DoD oversees the environmental restoration process. RABs enable people interested in the environmental cleanup at a specific installation to exchange information with representatives of regulatory agencies, the installation, and the community. While the general public can comment on DoD's environmental restoration program, RABs offer a focused and interactive opportunity to participate in the environmental restoration process.

In most cases, a RAB addresses cleanup activities at one particular installation; however, there is no prohibition on convening a RAB to address cleanup activities at multiple installations, especially when the same community members are involved. A decision to have a RAB address multiple installations should include input from the communities involved as well as the installations and regulators.



## What is the purpose of a RAB?

A RAB provides the community with the opportunity to become involved in the environmental restoration process at DoD installations either as a RAB member or through attendance at RAB meetings. RABs offer members the opportunity to influence cleanup decisions through discussion and to provide input to the installation decision makers. Because representatives of the environmental agencies overseeing cleanup participate in the RAB, the RAB offers members and the public the opportunity to share their questions, concerns, and ideas with agencies involved in the cleanup.

# What is a Restoration Advisory Board?

## Can a RAB's mission statement and goals be amended?

Establishing a RAB's mission statement and goals should be one of the first undertakings of a RAB. A mission statement and goals help to focus the RAB and give it direction. Since the RAB members generate the mission statement and goals, they have the ability to change them. The process for changing the mission statement and goals should be one of the items addressed by the operating procedures of the RAB. In all cases, the decision to change these items should be joint. If, after consultation, the installation and community co-chairs determine there is a valid need to alter the mission and goals, then these items may be amended using the process outlined in the operating procedures.

## What issues do RABs address?

RABs may only address issues associated with environmental restoration activities. Funding for RABs is received from the Service's Environmental Restoration accounts; therefore, RABs may only discuss environmental restoration topics. If another issue of community interest arises in the course of a RAB's discussions, then the RAB installation co-chair should refer the issue to the appropriate offices or individuals at the installation. Limiting the RABs to discussions of environmental restoration helps to ensure that RABs remain focused and provides maximum opportunity to discuss issues related to environmental restoration activities.

## What if I want to discuss other issues?

Individuals hoping to discuss activities other than environmental restoration, such as noise or water quality concerns, should contact the RAB installation co-chair. The co-chair will identify the point of contact (POC) or office responsible for handling the issues of interest and pass along the names of inquirers to the appropriate offices for resolution.

## What activities can RABs undertake?

Examples of activities a RAB may undertake are:

- Reviewing and commenting on environmental restoration documents and activities, preliminary assessments, site inspections, remedial investigations and other documents;
- Providing information to the community;
- Receiving input from the community; and
- Obtaining information regarding the schedule, type, and status of environmental restoration activities.

## How can I find out about a RAB's activities?



The RAB directory is located on DENIX at <https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/Library/Cleanup/CleanupOfc/stakeholder/rabdirectory.html>



DoD maintains records of RAB activities, procedures, and meeting minutes in an information repository (IR). This repository is publicly available and can be found in a local library or other community location. The location of the information repository should be based on information provided by the community. It should be accessible and convenient for the community. To find out where the RAB maintains its IR, contact the POC or co-chairs by browsing the RAB directory online.

# What is a Restoration Advisory Board?

## Are RABs required?

In some cases, RAB activities are documented in meeting minutes posted on project web sites on the World Wide Web. The POC or RAB co-chairs can provide those Web sites to interested parties.

RABs fulfill a statutory requirement for DoD to establish, whenever possible and practical, a committee to review and comment on DoD actions and proposed actions regarding environmental restoration. DoD strongly encourages RABs at installations where environmental restoration activities occur and where there is community interest in establishing a RAB. Technical Review Committees (TRCs) satisfy the same statutory requirements as a RAB, but RABs are the preferred forum. If the community is not interested in establishing a RAB at the installation, then a RAB is not required; however, DoD must make the opportunity to establish a RAB available if the community becomes interested and must assess community interest every 24 months while environmental restoration activities are still ongoing.

## Are RABs decision making bodies?

RABs provide valuable input to the installation and environmental agencies on environmental restoration decisions, but the installation retains ultimate decision making authority.

## Is consensus necessary for a RAB?

No, consensus is not necessary. The Department of Defense is trying to make decisions based on input from as many constituencies as possible and appreciates advice from individuals.

## Must an installation follow RAB recommendations?

The installation decision makers will listen closely to and consider the input RAB members provide, including any recommendations they may have regarding environmental restoration activities; however, the installation retains ultimate decision making authority. A RAB is a community stakeholder group that meets on a regular basis to discuss environmental restoration at a specific property that is either currently or was formerly owned by DoD, but where DoD oversees the environmental restoration process. RABs enable persons interested in the environmental cleanup at a specific installation to exchange information with representatives of regulatory agencies, the installation, and the community. While the general public can comment on DoD's environmental restoration program, RABs offer a focused and interactive opportunity to participate in the environmental restoration process.

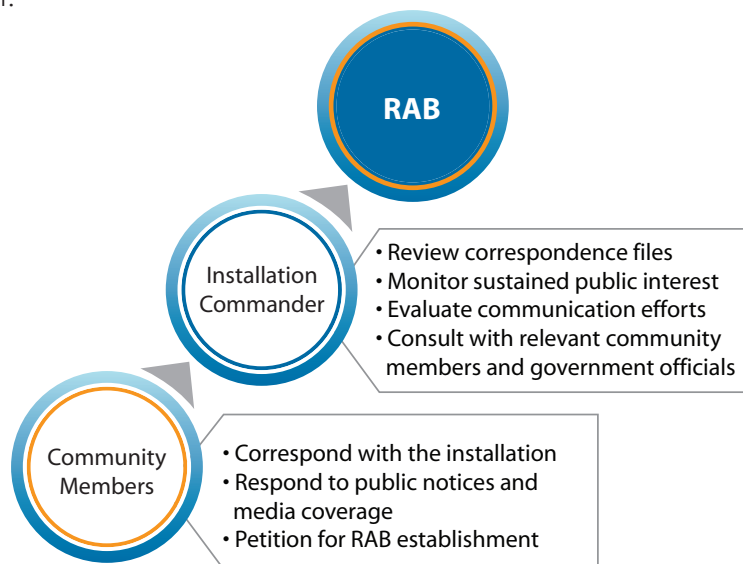
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## How is a RAB established?

The Department of Defense defined a process for establishing RABs to ensure consistency and fairness among communities and installations. This process defines authority to determine the need to establish a RAB, the criteria by which the need for a RAB is determined, and the actions necessary to form a RAB. A RAB ensures interested individuals and groups from the community have an opportunity to thoughtfully participate in the decision making process of environmental restoration activities in a timely manner.

### Who determines the need to establish a RAB?

Two parties determine the need to establish a RAB: the public and the Installation Commander. The public plays a vital role in determining whether a RAB should be established by following the steps to establish a RAB. The Installation Commander reviews and considers input and sustained interest from the public when evaluating whether the criteria for establishing a RAB are met.



### If I live near an installation without a RAB, how can I help establish one?

When environmental restoration activities, at installations where there is no RAB, are of interest to members of the public they should follow the steps for establishing a RAB by contacting the installation POC or Public Affairs (PA) Office. The Installation Commander will review community interest to establish a RAB at least every 24 months.

### What can I do if I am only one of a few people interested in environmental restoration at the installation?

Individuals interested in environmental restoration at the installation should contact the installation POC or PA Office to express their interest in obtaining more information. Interested persons may also consider requesting a copy of the Community Relations Plan (CRP). Each installation is responsible for developing a CRP to outline cleanup actions and ways the community can participate. Through this plan, the public and community may become active participants in the environmental restoration process.

Interested individuals may also become involved by asking the installation whether a RAB or TRC is currently operating at an installation. If neither exist at an installation, an individual may contact the installation and ask about opportunities for involvement.

# How is a RAB established?

## What are the criteria for establishing a RAB?

The installation will form a RAB when there is sufficient and sustained community interest and one of the following criteria is met:

- The installation is closing and transferring property to the community;
- At least 50 local citizens have petitioned for a RAB;
- Federal, tribal, state, or local government representatives have requested a RAB; or
- The installation has determined the need for a RAB.

## What if I live in a small community and less than 50 people are interested in establishing a RAB?

The installation will examine whether sufficient and sustained community interest to form a RAB has been demonstrated by individuals who represent various interests, diverse viewpoints, and different backgrounds within the community. The installation will determine whether any of the criteria for establishing a RAB are met by reviewing media files, reviewing correspondence with the installation, and consulting with potential stakeholders and government officials.

If an individual lives in a less populated area but sustained interest exists to establish a RAB, the community may still petition for the creation of a RAB. Those who are interested may contact the installation POC or PA Office expressing the desire to establish a RAB and ask about alternative opportunities for involvement. They may also contact EPA, the tribe with jurisdiction over the property (if any), or the state environmental regulatory agency.

## Can circumstances require reevaluating the decision against establishing a RAB?

If an event occurs (e.g., a feature on the local news) to suddenly increase community interest at an installation where the decision has already been made not to establish a RAB, then the Installation Commander will determine whether to reevaluate the criteria. The Installation Commander will also examine the totality of evidence for diverse interests to determine whether the sudden increase in community interest is likely to be sustained or temporary.

## Will evaluation depend on quantity, quality or both?

Both the number and content of correspondences will be evaluated against the establishment criteria. Sustained interest shows commitment from the community and is an important factor when deciding if a community is prepared to maintain a RAB during an installation's environmental restoration activities.

## How often does the installation review community interest when a determination has been made not to establish a RAB?

An Installation Commander is required by the RAB Rule to evaluate criteria to establish a RAB at least once every 24 months while environmental restoration activities are still ongoing. However, there may be a need to review this criteria on a shorter schedule if the installation's cleanup status changes or if a new contaminant is found. The public can submit a petition for establishment at any time. Regulatory agencies may also recommend the installation review public interest or convene a RAB at any time.

# How is a RAB established?

**When establishing a RAB how will the base know which local community members to consult?**

When an installation is preparing to establish a RAB, it will consult with individuals who were interviewed during the development of the CRP, as well as others who were identified within the community. The installation should also consult with individuals who served on the RAB selection panel. Former CRP participants and proposed panel members should represent a cross-section of organizations and professions. Examples of organizations and professions these individuals belong to may include:

Organizations	Professions
Local Redevelopment Committees	Teachers
Technical Review Committees	Architects
Environmental Groups	Social Service Counselors
Civic Interest Organizations	Fire Fighters
Local Government	Game Wardens
Special Interest Groups	Engineers

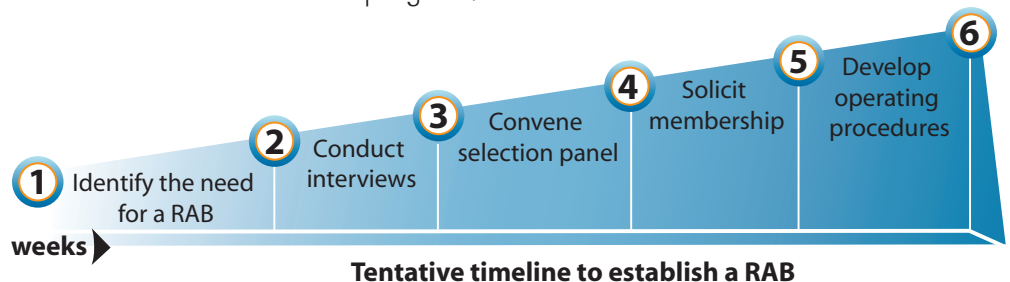
**How will the installation contact community members for consultation?**

The installation will consult with community members through personal face-to-face meetings whenever possible. If geographic barriers limit personal interaction, it may be necessary to conduct consultation through electronic mail or phone interviews. An installation may post a notice in a local newspaper informing the community of its intent to contact community members for consultation purposes. The installation may also benefit from contacting the media prior to conducting interviews to give notice to the local community. This notice can provide the community with an overview of RAB establishment procedures and the goals the installation hopes to achieve with its RAB.



**What is the timeline for establishing a RAB — e.g., how long does an installation have to assess sufficient and sustained community interest, as measured from the triggering event?**

There is no timeline for RAB establishment. Typically, it may take the installation four to six weeks to notify the community, approve membership, and create operating procedures, but each installation may take a different amount of time to complete these steps. DoD recommends an installation begin the steps to establish a RAB as soon as possible following the discovery that the installation will be conducting cleanups under the environmental restoration program.





# How is a RAB established?

## How will the installation prepare for establishing a RAB?

To prepare for establishing a RAB, the installation will use fact sheets, press releases, public notices, public service announcements and newspaper ads to:

- Educate the community on a RAB's purpose;
- Inform the community of membership opportunities; and
- Discuss how the RAB relates to the installation's community involvement program.

In addition, the installation will solicit community input, interview affected community members, and consult with government agencies in the planning phase of the RAB. Regardless of whether or not the installation has a RAB, the installation should have a proactive, long term, and comprehensive community involvement program in place. The community involvement program details the activities the installation intends to undertake with help from the community and may also suggest community involvement methods. The installation will also sponsor an initial meeting to introduce RAB concepts to the community and begin the process of soliciting members.

## Who will establish the RAB?

Once the evaluation is complete, the Installation Commander is responsible for establishing a RAB.

## How does a RAB acquire members?

Once RAB establishment has been announced, the installation begins soliciting community members for participation. The installation will provide a person to fill the role of the RAB installation co-chair and begin the process of convening the selection panel to nominate individuals for membership on the RAB. EPA and tribal, state and local governments are also encouraged to participate in convening the selection panel as well as nominating representatives to the RAB.

## How does a RAB solicit members at establishment?

The Installation Commander will consult with the DoD regulatory community and key local government officials to form a selection panel to identify community leaders and representatives for RAB membership. These potential members should represent the community based on diverse interests. The selection panel will review the Community Relations Plan, correspondence and media files to identify potential members. The panel will also evaluate interest forms from the community to determine the level of interest and diversity among the candidates. It is recommended that members of the selection panel not be selected as RAB members.

## How does a potential new member indicate interest in belonging to a previously established RAB?

A potential new member to an established RAB may contact the remedial project manager (RPM), installation co-chair, PA Office, or other member of the RAB to inquire about membership. The RAB should discuss the mechanism for adding new members early in the process and outline the mechanism in the RAB's operating procedures.

# How is a RAB established?

**If I live near an installation with a RAB, how can I become involved?**

**What might be appropriate circumstances for a RAB to solicit new members?**

**How will the RAB solicit new members?**

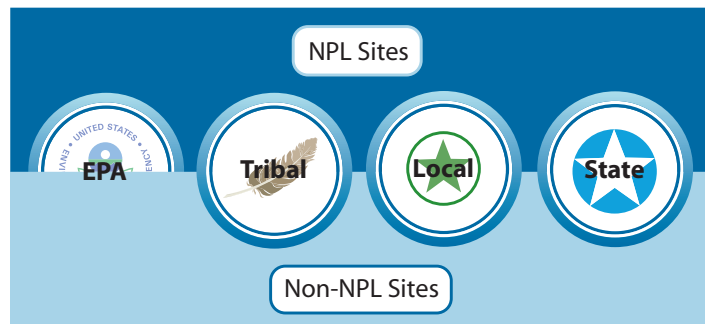
**How are regulatory members selected?**

RAB meetings are open to public participation and RABs welcome suggestions, concerns, or questions. If an individual lives and/or works in an area affected by the installation he/she may be eligible for membership. Individuals should contact the RAB or the installation co-Chair or PA office to inquire about the possibility of becoming a member.

A RAB may need to solicit new members when major changes affect the installation or the environmental restoration activities at the installation, or when changes in the community result in a new constituency. Examples might include the addition of Military Munitions Response Program sites, the installation's placement on the National Priorities List (NPL) or a base realignment and closure (BRAC) list, new residential or commercial development, or the need to replace members who have moved away. In these cases, new members may be needed to ensure that diversity on the RAB is maintained. DoD should limit its representation to one member, who should be the DoD co-chair. Other DoD experts or specialists may attend meetings as necessary.

During an update the RAB will solicit new members in accordance with its operating procedures. To maintain RAB diversity, replacement members will generally be sought from the same constituency as the former member.

The regulatory agency with environmental restoration oversight responsibility at the installation will provide one representative to participate in the RAB. At NPL sites, EPA and tribal, state, and local governments each will have one representative. At non-NPL sites, EPA will generally not be represented, although representatives may participate if they desire.



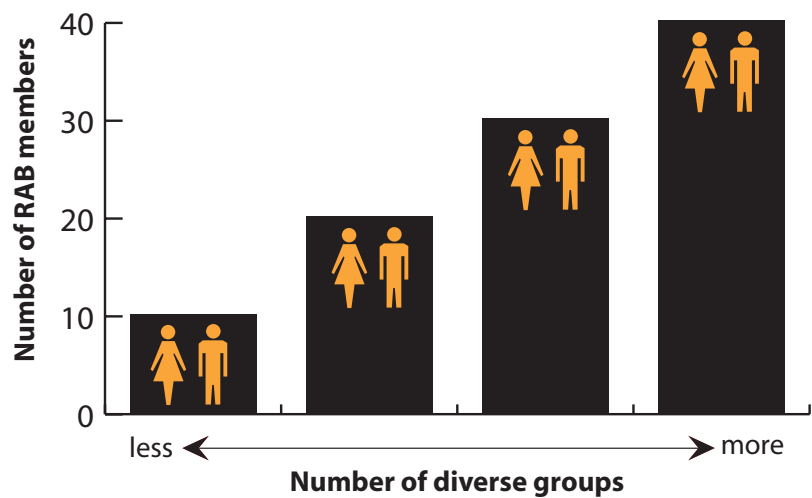
# 3 Who can participate in a RAB?

RABs are comprised of individuals from the community who are affected by the installation’s environmental restoration activities because they live and/or work in close proximity to the installation. Anyone interested in restoration activities and willing to dedicate their time may participate in RAB meetings, although they may not actually be a RAB member. RABs also include representatives from the installation and regulatory agencies that oversee cleanup at the installation.

## How big can a RAB be?

RAB size is an installation-specific issue and should be determined in the operating procedures unique to each RAB. Factors influencing the number of members are a reflection of diverse interests, issues affecting the surrounding communities, community interests, and population of the surrounding community.

To maintain a constructive dialogue, the Department suggests the RAB be no larger than 30 individuals, but not so small that diverse interests are not adequately represented. A RAB member may represent more than one group or interest.



## How does the installation ensure that diverse interests are represented and that members fairly represent the local community?

The selection panel, which is made up of community members with varying backgrounds and interests, evaluates the candidates. The selection panel seeks out members using methods intended to reach a diverse audience. For example, the panel may post newspaper ads, distribute fliers in locations throughout the community, and have announcements made on the radio, in churches, schools, and community centers. Diversity determination is based on a candidate’s responses to the evaluation forms, involvement in outside community groups and organizations, occupation, interests, and dedication to cleanup progress at the installation. The Commanding Officer of the installation will make the final judgment on the diversity of the candidates. He or she may reject the entire slate recommended by the selection panel based on the lack of diversity, but cannot reject individuals.

# Who can participate in a RAB?

## How are community interest forms distributed to the community?

Interest forms may be announced and distributed through several fora to ensure as many people as possible in the community are provided with the opportunity to respond. Installations can publish the evaluation forms in local newspapers and community newsletters; post them on the installation Web site, provide copies at local libraries and recreation centers; provide copies to local schools for children to take home to parents; make announcements at city hall meetings and during church services; or provide an information phone line at the installation.



## Can I provide input into the selection criteria of new members if I am already a RAB member?

RAB members may provide input into the selection criteria of new RAB members to replace members who are leaving. This process is defined in the RAB's operating procedures. Each RAB's unique operating procedures should specify the nomination and selection process for replacement members.

The selection panel generally exists only once—during the creation of a new RAB or in some cases when an adjourned or dissolved RAB is reinstated. In these cases, former RAB members will generally not be involved in the creation of the new RAB.

## Do I need to have environmental restoration experience to serve as a co-chair or community RAB member?

No. Environmental restoration experience may be beneficial, but is not required of either community co-chairs or community RAB members. Training is provided to RAB members to help explain environmental restoration processes and site-specific issues. A potential co-chair or member's interest in the community and environment, and commitment to dedicate time to the process are important factors. The selection panel will place greater emphasis on the diversity an individual would bring to the RAB, and the individual's expressed commitment toward achieving the RAB's goals, than to experience.

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## What are the roles and responsibilities of RAB participants?

The following chapter outlines the roles and responsibilities of each RAB participant.

### RAB Participant

#### Installation Commander

#### Installation co-chair

#### Community co-chair

### Roles and Responsibilities

- Establish a RAB when appropriate and periodically reevaluate community interest.
  - Approve RAB operating procedures, based on recommendation of co-chairs.
  - Periodically monitor RAB meetings.
  - Arbitrate disputes, if necessary.
  - Determine when and if the RAB should be adjourned, dissolved, or reestablished.
- 
- Coordinate with the community co-chair to prepare and distribute agendas for meetings.
  - Ensure that DoD participates in an open, honest, constructive manner.
  - Discuss environmental matters in a manner that will ensure that lay members of the RAB can understand.
  - Attend all RAB meetings.
  - Ensure RAB members have the opportunity to provide input.
  - Ensure community issues and concerns related to restoration are addressed when raised.
  - Ensure documents distributed to the RAB are written in layman's terms when possible.
  - Ensure documents distributed to the RAB are made available to the general public.
  - Ensure an accurate list of interested parties is developed and maintained.
  - Provide relevant policies and guidance documents to the RAB.
  - Ensure that adequate administrative support is provided to the RAB.
  - Refer issues not related to restoration to the appropriate officials.
  - Report back to the commanding officer of the installation.
  - Ensure that RAB members receive necessary training.
- 
- Coordinate with installation co-chair and community members to prepare agendas.
  - Ensure that all RAB community members have the opportunity to participate in an open, honest, and constructive manner.
  - Ensure that community issues and concerns related to restoration are raised.
  - Coordinate with installation co-chair to ensure that periodic training assessments are conducted and training needs are met.
  - Assist with dissemination of information to the general public.
  - Report back to the community, and coordinate with other RAB members to ensure that they are adequately representing segments of the community at RAB meetings.
  - Serve without compensation on the RAB.

# What are the roles and responsibilities of RAB participants?

## RAB Participant

### Community members

- Attend meetings.
- Provide individual input in an open, honest, and constructive manner.
- Represent and communicate community concerns to the RAB.
- Act as a conduit for exchange of information.
- Review, evaluate and comment on documents and other materials related to restoration.
- Represent and communicate RAB issues to the community.
- Serve without compensation on the RAB.

### Local and State government members

- Attend meetings.
- Serve as a referral and resource on restoration.
- Review documents and other materials related to restoration.
- Ensure that state and local environmental standards and regulations are identified and addressed by the installation.
- Facilitate flexible and innovative resolutions of environmental issues and concerns.
- Assist in education and training for RAB members.

### Tribal government members

- Attend meetings.
- Serve as a referral and resource on restoration.
- Review documents and other materials related to restoration.
- Ensure that tribal environmental standards and regulations are identified and addressed by the installation.
- Facilitate flexible and innovative resolutions of environmental issues and concerns.
- Educate RAB members regarding tribal sovereignty, tribal laws and their application to the property.
- Participate in the RAB without replacing the government-to-government relationship with the Federal government.
- Assist in education and training for RAB members.

### EPA member

- Attend meetings.
- Serve as a referral and resource on restoration.
- Facilitate flexible and innovative resolutions of environmental issues and concerns.
- Ensure that federal environmental standards and regulations are identified and addressed by the installation.
- Assist in education and training for RAB members.

### Public

- Participate in community RAB meetings.
- Observe rules and operating procedures when participating at RAB meetings or interacting with RAB members.
- Ask questions to ensure understanding of RAB activities and impact on the community.

## Roles and Responsibilities

# What are the roles and responsibilities of RAB participants?

■ ----- ■  
**How will the RAB handle a co-chair or other RAB member who is not committed to the RAB's goals and objectives, or is not meeting their responsibilities?**

■ ----- ■  
**How can a RAB resolve disputes if an impasse cannot be broken within the operating procedures?**

Each RAB's operating procedures should provide guidelines for how to handle situations that hinder open participation and communication. The RAB's objective is to create a forum for discussion that facilitates completing environmental restoration activities at an installation in an open and cooperative environment. In cases where communication becomes tangled and members doubt the sincerity of one another, the best solution is to discuss these concerns within the RAB, in accordance with the operating procedures.

An independent facilitator may be brought to the RAB to explore disputes within the group. A meeting facilitator can be a useful tool to help RAB members focus on their goals for the installation.

# 5 How does a RAB operate?

Each RAB develops its own unique set of operating procedures based on the needs of the RAB and the installation. However, the RAB Rule does provide certain requirements. These requirements include, but are not limited to, developing a mission statement, providing training to members, and updating RAB information in the administrative record.

## What is a RAB's mission statement?

A RAB's mission statement details the RAB's goals and describes its purpose. It also provides a focus for environmental restoration discussions to help the RAB stay on track during meetings.

## Why should a RAB develop operating procedures?

RABs are encouraged to develop operating procedures to guide the RAB members during operation and make the RAB an effective and functioning advisory board. Operating procedures establish rules and guidelines for issues the RAB may address relating to membership, participation, restoration, training, roles and responsibilities, and reporting requirements.

## Is there a standard outline for developing operating procedures?

The RAB Rule outlines standard operating procedures that could apply to all RABs regardless of geographic location or environmental restoration activities. Individual RABs are encouraged to develop their own unique and installation-specific operating procedures.

## When should a RAB develop operating procedures?

A RAB should develop operating procedures as soon as it is officially formed. Official formation is complete when co-chairs and members have been selected from the community and appropriate government agencies.

## How often should a RAB meet?

A RAB should meet as often as necessary. RAB members should decide on a schedule when they establish the RAB's operating procedures, and then add or delete meetings from the schedule as necessary. There are times when a flurry of activity occurs in planning or conducting environmental restoration and RABs may want to meet more often to review and provide input on relevant documents and ensure that they stay abreast of the activities. There are other times when the RAB may determine that infrequent meetings are adequate.

## How does my RAB receive funding to operate?

Installations use their Environmental Restoration (ER) accounts to support RAB activities. The RAB itself will not receive funding for its activities.

Funded Activities	Non-Funded Activities
RAB establishment	Transportation costs
Membership selection	Compensation for volunteer time
Site-specific and relevant training	Meals and beverages at meetings
Meeting announcements, facilities, and facilitators	RAB member business cards
Mailing list maintenance and distribution	Computers, offices and other office/business materials
Meeting agenda materials	Member stationary



# How does a RAB operate?

**Are Web sites eligible administrative expenses?**

RABs may include information on an installation- or Service-sponsored Web site, but may not claim Web sites or their maintenance as eligible administrative expenses.

**How often can my RAB receive training?**

RABs and community members can receive training whenever necessary. Installations should provide training during RAB orientation to provide information on what is expected of a RAB and to assist RAB members in gaining an understanding of installation-specific environmental and health issues. Other training should be tailored to site-specific issues and provided as necessary.

**What are examples of training my RAB could receive?**

RABs may receive training specific to environmental restoration activities at the installation.

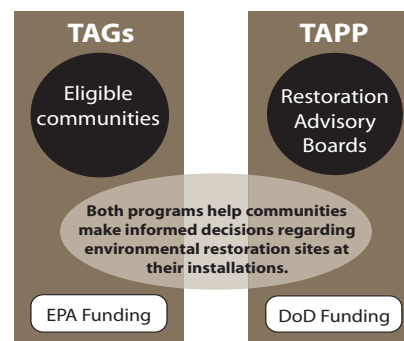
RAB Training Locations	Types of RAB Training
Meetings	Processes and vocabulary
Workshops	Prioritization
Briefings	Technology
Tours	Environmental restoration issues

**Is there a training budget?**

There is no dedicated funding source specific to RAB training. Any training that RABs receive from the installation is based on the availability of funds received from the Service's ER account. RABs seeking additional support could potentially qualify for a Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) or Technical Assistance for Public Participation (TAPP) or technical advice from EPA's Technical Outreach Services for Communities.

**What are the purposes of TAGs and TAPP?**

TAGs and TAPP are two separate programs that can provide communities with independent technical assistance to interpret scientific or engineering issues related to an installation's environmental restoration.



**Why is it important to receive independent technical advice?**

Independent technical advice can help the RAB community members understand environmental restoration activities at an installation including specific remedies and actions, therefore contributing to completing an environmental remedy at a site and closeout of environmental restoration projects at an installation.

# How does a RAB operate?

## Are TAGs and TAPP available to all RABs?

## How do RABs receive TAGs and TAPP?



Visit the EPA Web site for more information on TAGs at <http://www.epa.gov/superfund/tools/tag/>

DoD's TAPP information is available on the DENIX Web site at [https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/Library/Cleanup/CleanupOfc/Documents/RAB/tapp\\_brochure.html](https://www.denix.osd.mil/denix/Public/Library/Cleanup/CleanupOfc/Documents/RAB/tapp_brochure.html)

TAGs are provided by the EPA and are only available at NPL sites. TAPP is provided by DoD and is available to community members of the RAB at installations participating in the DERP. TAPP must be requested by a majority of community members of the RAB.

A RAB must follow an application process to apply for either a TAG or TAPP before either one can be obtained.

Before applying for a TAG, a group must first confirm its eligibility to receive funding from EPA. The following table highlights the groups who are eligible and not eligible to receive TAGs. If a group is eligible they must submit a letter of intent to EPA.

Eligible Groups for TAGs	Non-Eligible Groups for TAGs
Groups living near an NPL site	Potentially responsible parties
Groups affected by a release or threatened release of contaminants	Academic Institutions
Groups whose economic well-being, health, or enjoyment of the environment are threatened	City or county governments
All groups must be non-profit or working toward non-profit status	Groups established or supported by the government

Each group of TAG applicants must acknowledge dedication of time, resources, and management of its future TAG. Additionally, groups applying for TAGs must justify how the funds will be used once the TAG is awarded and establish an accounting system for reporting costs to EPA.

TAPP applicants should notify the installation of their intent to apply for TAPP. The RAB community members must demonstrate that the technical expertise gained through TAPP is not available through another government agency and that it will benefit the community's understanding of environmental restoration activities. The RAB must agree and certify by majority to apply for TAPP before the application can be considered. Once the request has been formally submitted to the Installation Commander, the TAPP project must be reviewed to ensure it meets eligibility requirements. The following table highlights eligible and non-eligible TAPP activities.

Eligible Activities for TAPP	Non-Eligible Activities for TAPP
Interpreting technical documents	Lawsuits or other legal activities
Assessing technologies	Political activities or lobbying
Participating in relative risk site evaluations	Collecting new data samples
Reviewing health risks	Epidemiological testing
Training	Community outreach efforts

# How does a RAB operate?

**Are there funding ceilings on TAG and TAPP monies?**

Yes, there are funding ceilings on TAG and TAPP monies. Each RAB is eligible for funding up to \$100,000 or 1% of estimated restoration costs with a maximum of \$25,000 allowed per year. EPA should be contacted for more specific information regarding TAGs.

**Why do RABs keep records of their activities?**

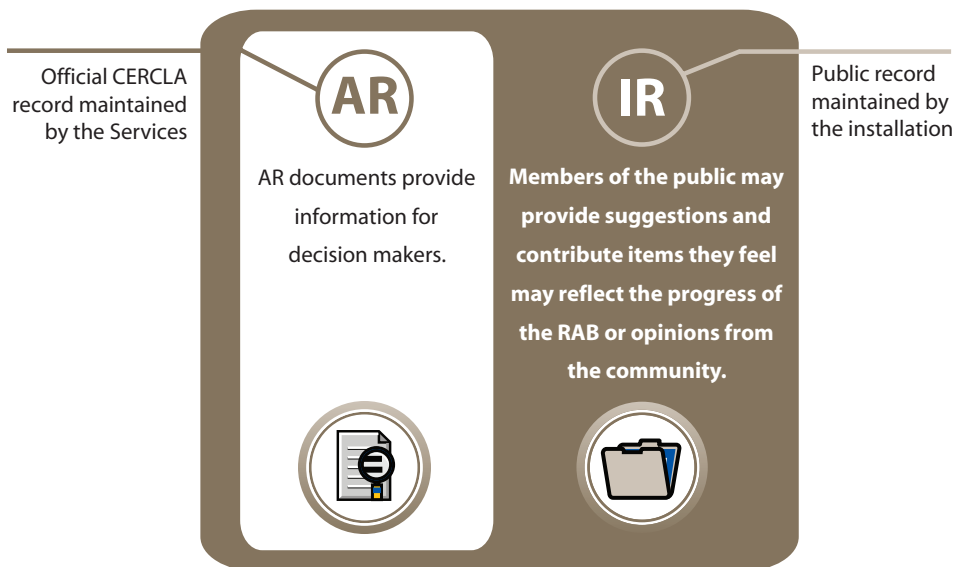
RABs keep records of their activities for historical purposes and to keep the community informed of their progress at the installation. Each year, the Office of the Secretary of Defense reports to Congress activities performed by RABs, advice they have provided, how much each RAB received for TAPP, and funds used by RABs for administrative support, which are all recorded in the administrative record and the information repository.

**What is the difference between the administrative record and the information repository?**

The administrative record (AR) is the official record of documents that form the basis for selecting a response action required under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA).

The information repository (IR) is the public record maintained by the installation that includes information beyond what is included in the AR. Members of the public may contribute comments, newspaper articles, or other items.

The IR and a copy (or copies) of the AR are generally made available at publicly accessible locations, such as libraries.



**How often are the AR and IR updated?**

The AR and IR are updated with relevant information as such information becomes available.

**Who updates and reviews the AR and IR?**

The AR is reviewed and maintained by the Component responsible for environmental restoration. Frequently the RPM is responsible for the AR. The IR is also maintained by the Component responsible official.

# 6

## How does a community or installation know when a RAB has completed its work and is no longer needed?

A RAB's work is complete when there are no longer any environmental restoration activities at an installation because the installation has either reached a remedy in place or response complete, or when the community is no longer interested. At that time the RAB should complete the documentation of its activities and begin the process of adjournment.

**What is an example that may lead a RAB to adjourn?**

An example of a situation that may lead a RAB to adjourn may include, but is not limited to, the completion of environmental restoration activities at the installation.

**How long can a RAB be adjourned?**

A RAB is considered permanently adjourned unless new conditions are discovered, which could lead a RAB to reestablish itself. Examples of these conditions are a change in the environmental restoration remedy or renewed community interest. For more information on reestablishment, please see Chapter 8: *Can an adjourned or dissolved RAB be reestablished?*

**Does a RAB have to adjourn when land is transferred to a non-DoD entity?**

If DoD relinquishes control of the cleanup and property, such as through property transfer to a non-DoD entity, then DoD will also relinquish support of the RAB. If the community wishes to continue its involvement, an independent group may be formed to continue the functions of the RAB or the community may work with EPA or the state environmental regulatory agency to establish a group equivalent to a RAB. DoD will not provide representatives to serve on these groups, nor the resources to support them when the Department is no longer involved in environmental restoration at the installation.

**Can a RAB continue operating after environmental restoration activities are complete?**

Under certain circumstances, it may be appropriate for a RAB to continue operating after environmental restoration activities are complete at an installation. For example, the RAB may meet to review the outcome of a CERCLA five-year review, or meet to discuss long-term management of land use controls implemented in connection with the environmental restoration activities at the installation.

**What do community and installation members do if a RAB has to be adjourned because there is no sustained interest, but environmental restoration activities are ongoing?**

Persons interested in ongoing environmental restoration activities should contact the installation POC to express their interest and seek information on any other community involvement programs available at the installation. Continued stakeholder feedback is important to the progress of restoration activities at installations, especially when they are ongoing. Following the decision to adjourn, the Installation Commander will also continue to evaluate community interest at least every 24 months while environmental restoration activities are still ongoing.

**Does a RAB have to be formally adjourned?**

No. A RAB may stop meeting without any formal adjournment if a community loses interest. However, the Department recommends that the RAB formally adjourn to provide community members an opportunity to participate in the decision to adjourn. Formally adjourning a RAB provides all parties with a sense of closure.

# How does a community or installation know when a RAB has completed its work and is no longer needed?

## RAB adjournment table

An installation may...	
<b>Adjourn a RAB if...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of community interest,</li> <li>• Record of Decision is signed,</li> <li>• Response complete at all sites,</li> <li>• All remedies in place,</li> <li>• Achieved RAB goals</li> <li>• Land transferred to a non-DoD entity, and</li> <li>• No longer sufficient and sustained community interest.</li> </ul>
<b>And the Installation Commander...</b>	Consults with, and considers all comments provided by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community,</li> <li>• EPA,</li> <li>• States,</li> <li>• Tribes, and</li> <li>• RAB members.</li> </ul>
<b>Then the Installation Commander may...</b>	Adjourn the RAB.
<b>And the Installation Commander shall...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify RAB members and the public of the decision through writing and publication in a local newspaper.</li> <li>• Describe other ongoing public involvement opportunities.</li> <li>• Document the rationale for adjournment in a memorandum for inclusion in the administrative record.</li> </ul>

# 7 What happens if a RAB becomes ineffective?

A RAB can stop its activities in one of two ways—either by adjourning or dissolving. Dissolution is appropriate when the RAB has become ineffective and is no longer fulfilling the intended purposes of advising and providing community input to the installation and decision makers on environmental restoration projects.

## What could lead a RAB to dissolve?

RABs dissolve when members are no longer able to offer input because the RAB has developed irreconcilable issues and cannot provide input in a constructive manner as intended. Dissolution may be necessary if RAB meetings are spent discussing unrelated issues or if members are unable to collectively discuss the environmental restoration activities affecting the installation and community.

## Is dissolution permanent?

Dissolution of a RAB may be, but is not necessarily, permanent. A RAB may be reestablished if community interest increases or if environmental restoration activities are ongoing or reoccur. If a RAB was dissolved because of irreconcilable issues, it may be reestablished if the cause for dissolution has been resolved.

## What does the community and installation do if a RAB is dissolved, but environmental restoration activities are ongoing?

Persons interested in ongoing environmental restoration activities should contact the installation POC to express their interest and seek information on other community involvement programs available at the installation. Continued stakeholder feedback is important to the restoration progress at installations, especially when restoration activities are ongoing. The Installation Commander will continue to evaluate community interest at least every 24 months following a RAB's dissolution. If the community interest in a RAB is reignited and sustainable, it is possible for a RAB to be reestablished. (See Chapter 8 for more details on reestablishing a RAB.)

## Can a RAB receive conflict resolution support before deciding to dissolve?

Yes. Dissolution should be a last resort to resolve a RAB's ineffectiveness. The Installation Commander should explore all possible means to resolve the conflict by hiring a professional mediator, directly addressing membership issues, or involving the installation's PA Officer.

## Is professional conflict resolution available and funded by DoD?

Yes. An installation may provide a professional facilitator to facilitate its RAB. Facilitators are paid with environmental restoration funding.

# What happens if a RAB becomes ineffective?

## RAB dissolution table

An installation may...	
<b>Dissolve a RAB if...</b>	RAB no longer fulfills purpose and responsibility.
<b>And the Installation Commander...</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notifies co-chairs, Deputy Assistant Secretary (DAS), and ODUSD(I&amp;E) in writing.</li> <li>• Provides 30 day public comment period for RAB members and the public.</li> <li>• Consults with:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community,</li> <li>• EPA,</li> <li>• States,</li> <li>• Tribes, and</li> <li>• RAB members.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Reviews comments,</li> <li>• Provides supporting documents and recommends dissolution to the DAS.</li> </ul>
<b>And the DAS...</b>	Notifies ODUSD(I&E) of the decision and rationale to approve or disapprove the dissolution request.
<b>Then the DAS may...</b>	Dissolve the RAB.

# 8

## Can an adjourned or dissolved RAB be reestablished?

RABs may be reestablished if they have been adjourned or dissolved. Reestablishment reflects community interest in an installation's environmental restoration activities and provides continued interaction between DoD and communities.

### Can inactivity lead a RAB to never be reestablished?

No. It is always possible for an adjourned or dissolved RAB to be reestablished no matter how long it remained inactive. As long as there is sustained community interest and DoD continues to have control of the cleanup and/or property a RAB may always be reestablished.

### How is membership determined when a RAB is reestablished?

The length of time the RAB has been adjourned or dissolved may affect how membership terms will be decided at reestablishment.

If a RAB is being reestablished following a short-term hiatus, the installation, community, and RAB may benefit from contacting former members and gauging their interest in resuming their positions with the RAB.

If there are members who choose not to return to the RAB following a short- or long-term break, or if the Installation Commander is no longer able to identify or contact former co-chairs and members, then the Installation Commander should follow the operating procedures and RAB Rule to establish new members and/or co-chairs. This process will follow membership procedures as if a new RAB were being established.

### How are operating procedures affected when an adjourned or dissolved RAB is reestablished?

If a RAB is being reestablished following a short-term adjournment and the former RAB members will resume their positions, then the RAB should consider keeping their prior operating procedures. This will allow the RAB to resume responsibilities in the same capacity as when the RAB adjourned. If former RAB members are not interested in resuming their positions and new members are recruited into the RAB, then the new RAB members should develop new operating procedures.

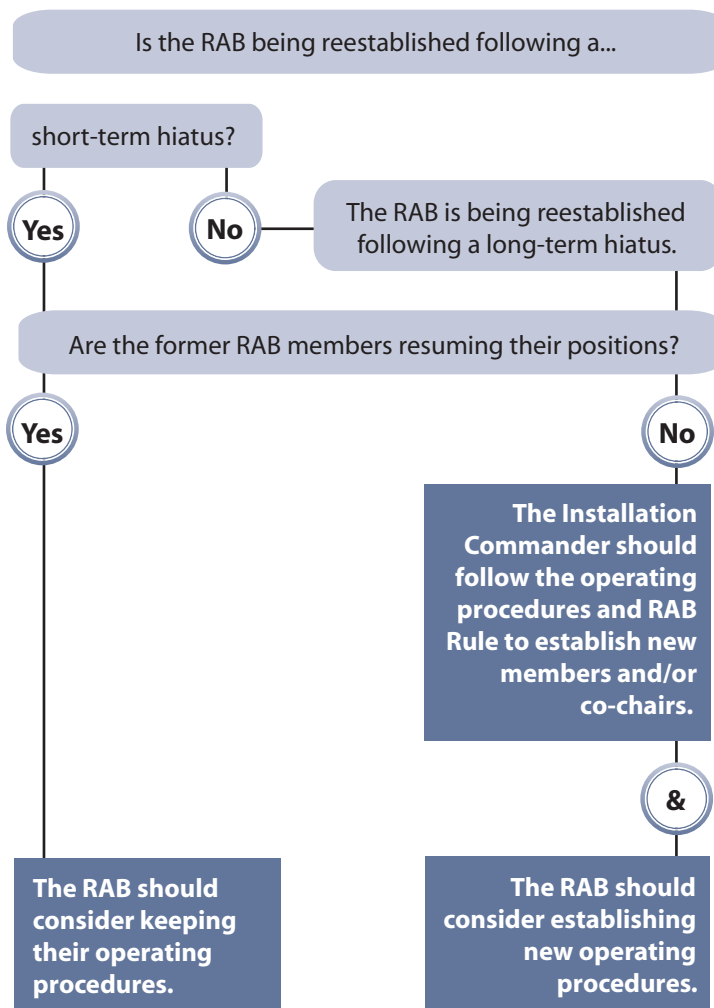
If a RAB is being reestablished following a long-term adjournment with either new or former members, the RAB may want to consider if it is necessary to establish new operating procedures based on the length of time the RAB was adjourned.

If a RAB is reestablished following either a short- or long-term dissolution, it may be necessary for the RAB to develop new operating procedures once membership is determined. The RAB may want to consider inserting language into the operating procedures that will help prevent the issues that caused dissolution to occur within the original RAB.

The following flow chart provides a summary of these determinations:



# Can an adjourned or dissolved RAB be reestablished?



**Should a RAB be reestablished if dissolution conditions still exist?**

**How will the community know if there are activities that may require reestablishment at a formerly dissolved or adjourned RAB?**

No, a RAB should not be reestablished if the dissolution conditions still exist. Reestablishing a dissolved RAB requires approval from the Component's Environmental DAS. (Please refer to Chapter 7 for conflict resolution support and availability.)

The community should be informed of new activities or requirements through the community relations process. In addition, the Installation Commander will continue to evaluate community interest at least every 24 months following the decision to dissolve or adjourn a RAB. The installation will also provide status reports through mailings or local information repositories on issues that may interest the community and prompt reestablishment.

# 9

## What happens to RABs at installations that are closing or have been closed under base realignment and closure (BRAC)?

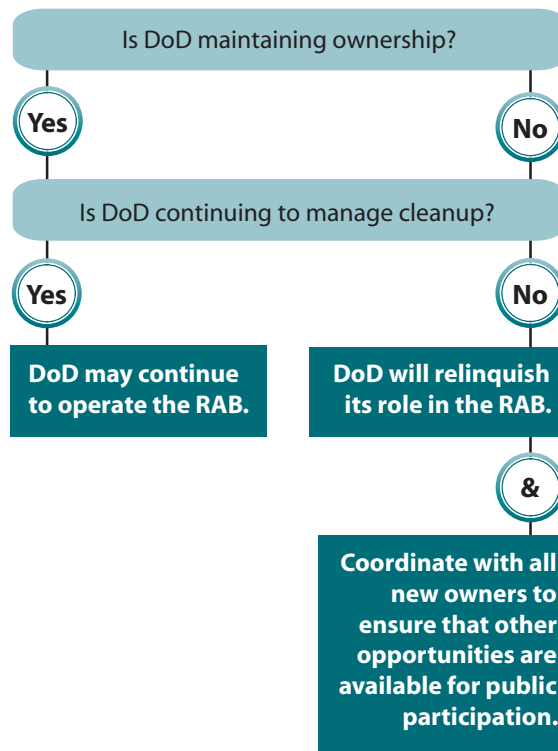
An installation may be closed or slated for closure under BRAC. When chosen for closure, DoD generally will transfer ownership of the installation to another person or entity at some point in the future. Because RABs are funded and supported by DoD, the transfer of the installation to a non-DoD entity will affect the continued existence and operation of the RAB.

**Will the RAB on a closing installation continue to operate?**

**Can the RAB on a closed installation continue to operate if DoD transfers the installation to a new owner under early transfer and continues to conduct the cleanup?**

If a RAB exists at an installation that is closing under BRAC, DoD may continue to operate the RAB as long as DoD maintains ownership of the property and continues managing cleanup activities. Once the installation is transferred out of DoD control and DoD is no longer responsible for cleanup activities, DoD will relinquish its role in the RAB. DoD will work with the new owner, EPA, the tribe with jurisdiction over the property (if any), and the state environmental regulatory agency to encourage the availability of opportunities for members of the community if the community desires to continue to participate in the process.

If DoD transfers the property but continues to manage the cleanup, DoD will continue to support the RAB. Community members should contact the new owner, EPA, the tribe with jurisdiction over the property (if any), and the state environmental regulatory agency for opportunities to provide input.



# What happens to RABs at installations that are closing or have been closed under BRAC?

**How can I provide input on environmental restoration activities after DoD has transferred ownership and cleanup responsibility?**

**Can I form a group to provide input if DoD is no longer involved?**

**Can I reestablish a RAB on a closed installation?**

**Can RABs be reestablished at installations that have been transferred out of DoD control?**

Once DoD has transferred ownership and environmental restoration responsibility of the installation, community members who are interested in any ongoing environmental restoration activities at the former installation should contact the installation's new owner, EPA, the tribe with jurisdiction over the property (if any), and the state environmental regulatory agency to find out about opportunities to provide input and participate in the cleanup process. For example, the new owner may agree to meet with community members on a regular basis for their input or the EPA, tribe with jurisdiction over the property (if any), or the state environmental regulatory agency may decide to continue a forum similar to the RAB.

The Department will neither sanction nor support community groups interested in providing input for environmental restoration activities once it has withdrawn from active involvement at an installation. However, there may be other venues that interested community members can use.

A RAB that has adjourned or dissolved may not be reestablished at a closed installation if it is no longer owned by or being actively cleaned up by DoD. However, if the installation is closing and DoD still owns the property and is carrying out environmental restoration activities at the installation, then a RAB may be reestablished.

See Chapter 8: *Can an adjourned or dissolved RAB be reestablished?* for membership and operating procedure questions regarding reestablishment of a RAB.

A RAB may be reestablished at installations that have been transferred out of DoD control only if DoD reacquires the installation or continues to perform day-to-day environmental restoration response activities.