



Handbook of Groundwater Protection and Cleanup Policies For RCRA Corrective Action

– A user-friendly, comprehensive publication to help you find and understand numerous policies concerning groundwater protection and cleanup

The *Handbook of Groundwater Protection* . . . contains the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) latest interpretation of policies on such topics as cleanup goals, the role of groundwater use, point of compliance, source control, and monitored natural attenuation. This *Handbook* ties 15 different topics together with an overall Groundwater Protection and Cleanup Strategy that emphasizes a phased, results-based approach to cleaning up contaminated groundwater.

Although the *Handbook* focuses on RCRA Corrective Action, we believe the plain language of the policy descriptions, and the Internet links to more detailed resources make it an invaluable resource for anyone involved with groundwater protection and cleanup issues. While highlighting flexible approaches, the *Handbook* reflects EPA's continuing policy of returning contaminated groundwater to its maximum beneficial use, and of controlling contamination sources, whenever such activities are technically possible from an engineering perspective.

Issuing this *Handbook* certainly does not shut the door on discussions about groundwater policies. Rather, we hope the *Handbook* will continue to foster dialogues on groundwater issues so that groundwater protection and cleanups will continue to improve. Recognizing that on-going dialogue could result in changes in policy, EPA designed the *Handbook* in a format that can be updated to help ensure that it contains the most current Agency positions.

This *Handbook* was developed jointly by EPA Headquarters and EPA Region III's Waste and Chemicals Management Division. EPA issued a draft version of the document for public comment in May 2000. The Agency believes this final version of the *Handbook* is an appropriate balance between existing groundwater policies and comments submitted on the draft version.

Using the *Handbook*

This publication is only guidance, and does not substitute for statutes or regulations. Thus, the *Handbook* does not impose legally binding requirements and may not apply to a particular situation based upon facility-specific circumstances.

Furthermore, since most states operate their own Corrective Action programs, you should consider applicable state requirements and guidance before conducting investigations and cleanups.

We specifically designed the *Handbook* to be useful as an electronic resource. For example, it provides internal links to help you navigate within the document and external Internet links that allow you to access nearly all of the references in Appendix 1. Appendices 2 and 3 also provide links to other helpful Internet resources and glossaries. You can view or download an electronic version of the *Handbook* at <<http://www.epa.gov/correctiveaction>>.

For More Information

For additional information, contact the RCRA Call Center. Callers within the Washington Metropolitan Area please dial 703-412-9810 or TDD 703-412-3323 (hearing impaired). Long-distance callers please call 1-800-424-9346 or TDD 1-800-553-7672. The RCRA Call Center operates weekdays, 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Address written requests to: RCRA-Docket@epa.gov or RCRA Information Center (5305W), 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20460-0001.

We welcome comments on this *Handbook* any time, and will consider those comments in future revisions. Address electronic comments to: RCRA-Docket@epa.gov, reference Docket number F-2001-CURF-FFFFF, or send hard copy comments to the RCRA Information Center at the above address.