

# FACT SHEET

## Forest Glen Annex Environmental Restoration Activities

### Regulatory Drivers – CERCLA

Fort Detrick

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The Installation Restoration Program (IRP) at Fort Detrick's Forest Glen Annex includes four sites that are being investigated under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA, also known as Superfund): FTGL-02 (Ballfield/Helipad/Rubble Dump Site); FTGL-03 (Commissary Landfill); FTGL-04 (Building 511 Landfill); and FTGL-05 (Building 607 Washdown Rack).

CERCLA was passed in 1980 in response to the discovery in the late 1970s of a large number of abandoned, leaking hazardous waste dumps that posed a serious threat to both human health and the environment. CERCLA was designed to impose cleanup and reporting requirements on the private sector as well as federal facilities by:

- Identifying those sites where releases of hazardous substances had occurred or might occur and pose a serious threat to human health, welfare, or the environment;
- Taking appropriate action to remedy those releases; and
- Seeking that the parties responsible for the releases pay for the cleanup activities.

CERCLA was amended by the Superfund Amendments and Reauthorization Act (SARA) in 1986, which included the National Oil and Hazardous Substances Pollution Contingency Plan (NCP) and the Community Right-to-Know Act. The National Contingency Plan detailed the specific steps involved in cleanup activities and set applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements for remedial action. The National Contingency Plan also requires the Environmental Protection Agency to maintain the National Priorities List, a list of the nation's most environmentally contaminated sites.

CERCLA authorizes cleanup responses when there is a release or threat of a release of a hazardous substance into the environment and sets a framework for implementing those responses. Two types of response actions are authorized: removal action and remedial action. Removal actions are undertaken to immediately abate, prevent, minimize, stabilize, mitigate, or eliminate the release or threatened release that may pose a threat to public health or welfare or the environment. Such events concern not only listed hazardous substances but also any pollutants or contaminants, with the exception of oil and gas.

Remedial actions provide a more permanent solution to hazardous substance threats and generally involve a more extensive study and action period. In many cases, the US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) attempts to identify the party or parties responsible for the contamination before taking any response actions itself. Responsible parties can be any of the following: past and present site owners; generators of hazardous substances found at the site; or transporters of hazardous substance to the site.

Under CERCLA, federal facilities are required to fund their own studies and cleanup. For the Department of Defense, these funds are managed under the Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP), which was established by SARA and includes the IRP. The IRP is a comprehensive program to identify, investigate and clean up hazardous substances, pollutants and contaminants at military installations. The CERCLA process steps that the Department of the Army follows to identify, investigate and cleanup historic and inactive sites are summarized on the back of this fact sheet.

## The CERCLA Process at US Army Installations



1. *Preliminary Assessment* - Existing data and records are reviewed to determine if potential contamination exists and affects soil or water.
2. *Site Inspection* - Samples are taken and research conducted to determine if the site has contaminated soil or water.
3. *Remedial Investigation (RI)* - The full extent and sources of contamination are researched and pinpointed during the RI phase. The data from the RI serves as the basis for a risk assessment. The risk assessment is used to characterize current and potential threats to human health and the environment and helps establish acceptable exposure levels.
4. *Feasibility Study (FS)* - Options for cleanup are investigated and identified. The technology and costs of the alternatives are analyzed in detail.
5. *Proposed Plan (PP)* - The PP is prepared for public comment. It summarizes the remedial alternatives presented in the FS, identifies the preferred alternative, provides rationale for that alternative, identifies any proposed waivers to cleanup standards, and documents the support agency's comments.
6. *Record of Decision (Decision Document)* - After careful consideration of all public comments and community concerns, the selected cleanup option is outlined in a public document called the Record of Decision. This document provides a responsiveness summary that specifically addresses comments from the public.
7. *Remedial Design* - This is an engineering phase that follows the record of decision when detailed designs, technical drawings, and specifications are developed for the subsequent remedial action phase.
8. *Remedial Action* - This is the actual implementation phase that follows the remedial design of the selected cleanup alternative. A qualified contractor begins cleanup according to the approved remedial design. Interim cleanup actions may occur anytime during the initial phases, and the public is involved as much as possible throughout the process.

**For more information** about ongoing environmental investigations at the Forest Glen Annex, please contact the Fort Detrick Public Affairs Office (see contact information at the top of this fact sheet).