



Franklin Slag Pile Superfund Site

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

– Frequently Asked Questions –



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has received several inquiries regarding the Franklin Slag Pile (FSP) Superfund Site due to recent media attention. This mailing is to share these questions and answers with the community and to provide an update on the status of the FSP site.

Background Information...

The FSP site is located in the Port Richmond section of Philadelphia, Pa. The site consists of a covered slag pile containing an estimated 68,000 cubic yards of material that was a byproduct from the copper smelting process at the neighboring Franklin Smelting and Refining Corporation. From the 1950s to 1999, MDC Industries sold slag for use in sandblasting and construction.

Q. What’s been done to help protect the health of nearby residents?

EPA became involved with the site when it was abandoned by MDC Industries. EPA conducted an emergency removal action from January 2000 to October 2000 in order to protect the neighborhood from health risks associated with the slag pile. EPA shipped slag and contaminated soil off-site for disposal; cleaned and dismantled equipment, buildings, and structures; and transported fuels and oils off-site for re-use. EPA then covered the remaining slag pile with a thick plastic cover (high-density polyethylene, also called HDPE) and fenced the entire property. In all, EPA removed over 12 thousand tons of contaminated soil and slag, 246 tons of hazardous debris, and 20 tons of bagged slag. The site is now being studied to determine appropriate long-term cleanup options.

Q. What is the status of the FSP Site cleanup?

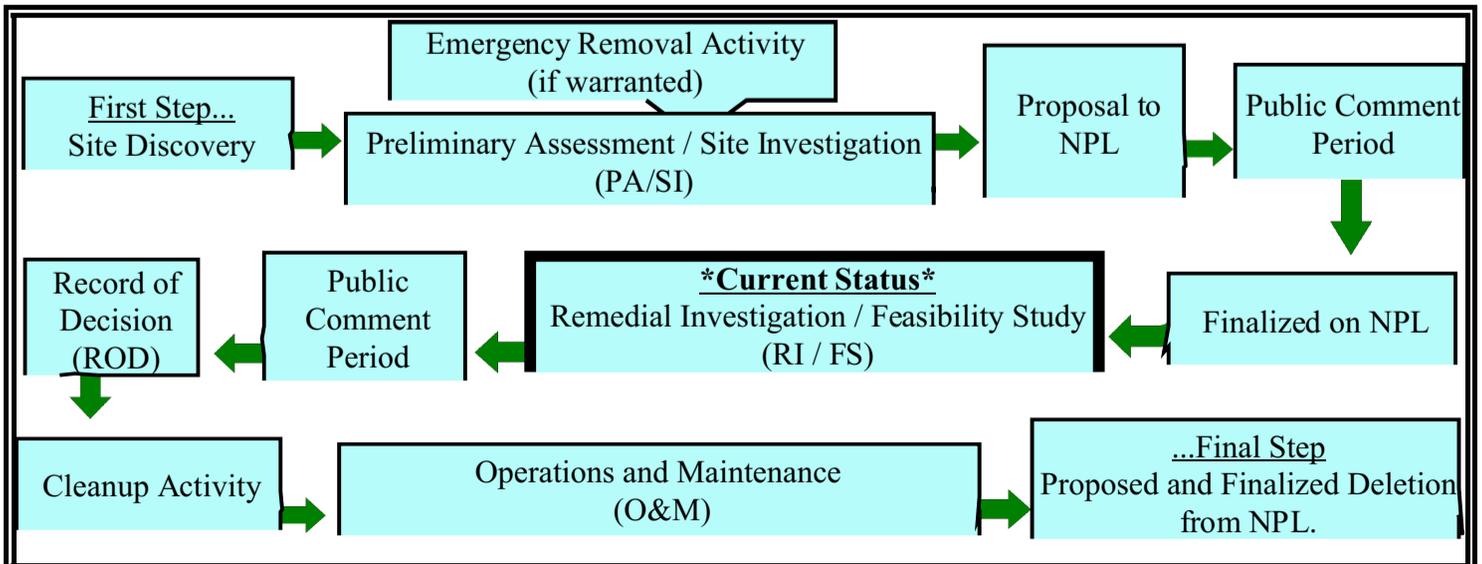
In September 2002, the site was placed on the National Priorities List (NPL). The NPL or “Superfund List,” gives EPA the regulatory authority and resources to investigate the contamination and develop a cleanup plan. EPA is in the midst of a Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (RI/FS). This study will help identify the contaminants, assess possible risks to human health and the environment, and develop cleanup plans and options. EPA is also currently searching for potentially-responsible parties (PRPs), to assist in the cleanup.

Q. How long does the process take?

Federal laws require EPA to first investigate the contamination and then develop ways to clean it up. This step of our regulatory process is the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study or RI/FS. It can take many years from when we first start our study to when we finish cleaning up a site. However, while we are doing our work, the slag pile is covered up with a thick plastic cover so no heavy metals are going into the air.

After the RI/FS is completed, we will write a proposal for how the site could be cleaned up and ask for public comment. Once the final decision on the type of cleanup has been made, we will design and begin the cleanup. The process does take time to go through each step as the laws require.

Superfund Process



Q. Will the site will be cleaned up fully?

“How clean is clean?” is a common question regarding Superfund sites. EPA completes site cleanups when the contaminants of concern are either removed, reduced below EPA standards, or exposure pathways are eliminated.

Q. What are the options / alternatives?

EPA will evaluate several different ways to cleanup the site. Typically, we evaluate cleanups that include methods of containing the waste, treating the waste, or removing the waste.

Q. Who’s responsible?

Once a cleanup plan is issued there are several options as to who will clean-up a site. The potentially responsible parties (PRPs) could fund the cleanup; a party interested in re-using the site may clean it up; or EPA will clean it up.

If you have other questions about this site, please contact...

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or visit the website at:
www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/super/PA/franklin-slag/

This fact sheet will be available on the website in both English and Polish

Q. What will happen next?

After the RI/FS is completed, EPA will propose its preferred method of cleanup, along with alternatives. During this step, EPA will seek comments from the public on the proposed plans and alternatives. Afterwards, when a final clean-up plan has been determined, EPA will issue the decision in a document called a Record of Decision (ROD).

The slag pile is currently covered with a thick plastic liner, which prevents the release of contaminants and protects the neighborhood.

Q. What is in the slag pile that can harm my health?

The slag pile contains high levels of metals. Metals, such as lead, are naturally-occurring substances, however exposure to elevated levels, over a long period of time, can cause health problems. For example, children under 6 years of age are especially sensitive to the affects of lead exposure. However, the slag pile is covered with a thick plastic liner, that prevents exposure to the heavy metals in the slag.

For more information about the possible health affects associated with lead and ways to reduce lead exposure, call the National Lead Information Center at 1-800-424-LEAD, or visit www.epa.gov/lead.



EPA Update for the Franklin Slag Pile Superfund Site



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