

*Preventing environmental damage from hazardous waste, and restoring contaminated sites for all Californians.*



State of California



Department of Toxic Substances Control

## How You Can Get Involved in DTSC's Removal Action Workplans and Make a Difference

When DTSC oversees an investigation or cleanup of hazardous waste at a site, the public is encouraged to become involved so that decisions that impact the community are addressed at each phase. The community members become involved in the process at the start of field work and, depending on the level of interest, can stay involved until the end of the cleanup.

A Removal Action Workplan, abbreviated as RAW, is a plan that outlines how hazardous waste will be removed from a site. This term differs from a "remedial action plan" in that a removal action workplan is usually used for a smaller, less expensive cleanup, and may be an interim cleanup as opposed to a final cleanup.

### How it Works

1. Early on in the project DTSC often begins its public outreach by distributing a written **community survey** to a project mailing list. The survey is typically distributed to addresses near the site, the local community's key leaders, businesses, elected officials, and statewide environmental stakeholders. The survey helps DTSC understand community concerns, demographic information, language needs, community awareness of a project, and how the community receives its information. If you are interested in participating in the survey or wish to be included in the mailing list, contact us through our Web site ([www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov)) or through one of our regional offices listed at the end of this guidance.
2. To gather more detailed information, **face-to-face interviews** are sometimes held with a cross-section of the community leaders and residents.
3. The results of the survey and the interviews are documented and combined when it is determined that a **public participation plan** is necessary. Information gathered helps determine how DTSC will work with the community throughout the project.
4. **Community letters and fact sheets** are used to summarize the site's progress and announce public comment periods, meetings, open houses or other public involvement opportunities. The letters and fact sheets are translated into other languages when necessary, distributed to the project mailing list and posted on DTSC's Web site. Included in each of these documents are the DTSC project team members and their contact information. Please feel free to contact these staff members directly at any time if you have questions or want to state your concerns.



5. To give the community members an opportunity to read and examine technical documents about the site, a **local information repository** is established. These technical documents are used to determine a proposed cleanup activity. A typical location for an information repository is the closest library to the site. However, the location of the repository is determined by the community's preference. Once the repository is established, the location is announced in fact sheets, public notices and community letters. If you have any questions about the material in the repository, please contact any member of the project team.

6. The next step is a **30-day public comment period**. This step is critical to gaining the community's input on the proposed decision. During this 30-Day Comment Period, an **open house** may be held to give community members the opportunity to ask questions on a one-to-one basis; look at photos; and review documents. A **community meeting** may be held to provide the community members with a presentation from technical staff, answer questions from the audience and receive comments from the public. If necessary, DTSC will provide a language interpreter at these meetings. It is during this period that the community is encouraged to provide DTSC with written comments.

7. At the close of the 30-Day Comment Period, DTSC evaluates all comments received and either approves or modifies the cleanup plan. To document DTSC's evaluation of each comment, a written **response to comments** is created and sent to anyone who provides comments or requests a copy.

8. Before cleanup work begins and depending on the level of community interest, a fact sheet is sent to the mailing list and the information repository.

9. Depending on the continued interest of the community, a **letter** may be sent to everyone on the project mailing list informing them that the cleanup is complete.

## Contact Us for More Information

Visit our Web site at [www.dtsc.ca.gov](http://www.dtsc.ca.gov). Click on one of two links on the home page: Get Involved or Calendar.

**Contact the Public Participation Specialist listed in your project's outreach material. If you do not know who is assigned to your project or have a general question, please contact one of the numbers listed below.**

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