



AMCO Chemical Superfund Site

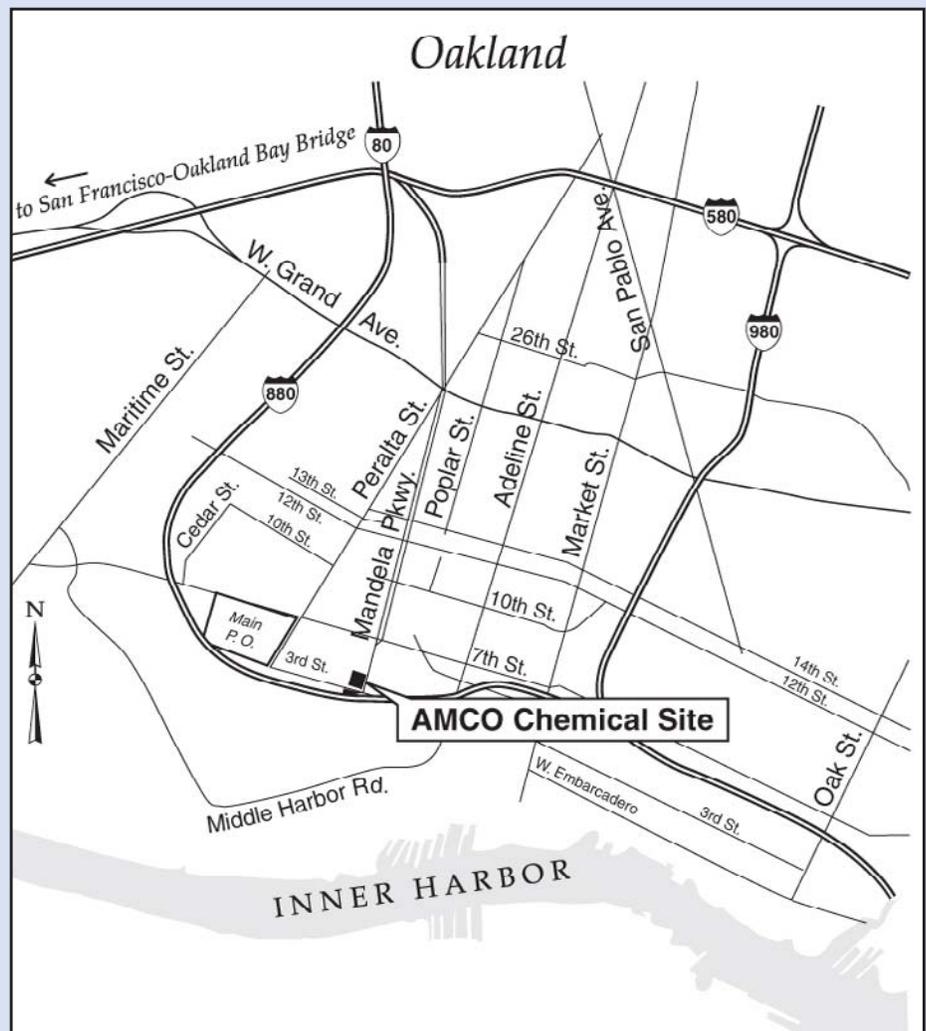
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency \$ Region 9 \$ San Francisco, CA \$ May 2009

Want to be more involved in the AMCO Superfund site Clean-up?

U.S. EPA is seeking interested community members to form a Community Advisory Group

The AMCO Chemical Superfund Site is located in South Prescott, a mixed residential/commercial neighborhood located in the “West Oakland” area of the City of Oakland. If you would like more information about the site, the information and fact sheets are available at: www.epa.gov/region09/amco.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be completing the Remedial Investigation and Feasibility Study (FS) for the AMCO Superfund site later this year. It is important that the community is aware of this report and has an opportunity for input and involvement. Work on the draft FS has begun and is scheduled to be available in the fall of 2009. The FS will outline alternatives that are being considered for cleaning up the site, and EPA would like to have as much community input as possible in finalizing this crucial document. EPA, with support from the community, would like to establish a Community Advisory Group in order to facilitate this process.



Information on U.S. EPA Community Advisory Groups (CAG)

EPA is committed to early, direct, and meaningful public involvement in the Superfund process. One of the ways communities can participate in site cleanup decisions is by forming a Community Advisory Group (CAG). This fact sheet provides information on CAG's.

What is a CAG?

A CAG is a diverse group of community members and stakeholders who represent diverse community interests. Its purpose is to provide a public forum for community members to present and discuss their needs and concerns related to the Superfund decision-making process.

CAGs offer EPA a unique opportunity to hear—and seriously consider—community preferences for site cleanup and remediation. The existence of a CAG does not replace the need for the Agency to keep the community informed about plans and decisions throughout the Superfund process.

When to form a CAG

A CAG can form at any time during the cleanup. EPA may assist communities in determining the need for a CAG by helping them evaluate the level of community interest in and concern about site activities, examine if there is an existing broad-based group that might function as a CAG, or if there are too many competing interests to make forming a truly representative CAG a realistic option.

What is involved in forming a CAG?

The first step to forming a CAG is completing and returning the enclosed application to help EPA determine if community support for a CAG exists. If there is community interest, EPA will hold a CAG Information Meeting to discuss such topics as:

- Purpose & overview of the CAG
- Goal of representing diverse community interests
- Interface between the CAG and other community involvement activities
- Membership opportunities
- CAG mission statements and operating procedures
- Suggested member responsibilities
- Overview of site cleanup plans and progress
- Open discussion

How does a CAG start?

Although the start of a CAG varies by site, EPA encourages CAGs to be in full operation within six months after the CAG Information Meeting in order to maximize their effectiveness in the Superfund decision-making process. In the interim, the Agency can assist the community in determining the appropriate size and composition of the CAG, soliciting nominees, and selecting CAG members.

What is the size of the CAG?

The size of a CAG depends on the needs of the affected community. While it often is difficult to ensure that everyone has an opportunity to participate and to achieve closure in large groups, the CAG should include enough members to adequately reflect the diversity of community interests regarding site cleanup and reuse. Typically CAGs have approximately 15-20 members.

Who are CAG members?

Members of the CAG should reflect the composition of the community near the site and the diversity of racial, ethnic, and economic interests in the community. At least half of the CAG members should be members of the local community.

If an EPA Technical Assistance Grant (TAG) is awarded for the site, as is the case with the AMCO site, EPA will encourage that a representative of the TAG group also be included on the CAG to facilitate information sharing between the two groups.

How are CAG members solicited?

EPA may begin to advise the community about opportunities for CAG membership as part of its outreach efforts (a CAG fact sheet and any public notices and news releases) prior to the CAG Information Meeting. Information about the CAG will also be available at the West Oakland Public Library, which is located at 1801 Adeline St., Oakland, CA 94617, Phone: (510) 238-7352. It may be necessary to focus solicitations for specific groups, and EPA could send a letter to selected groups representing diverse interests.

How are CAG members selected?

CAG members may be selected in a number of ways. For example:

- An existing group in the community—such as a group with a history of involvement at the Superfund site—could be selected as the CAG for that community if it represents the diverse interests of the community.
- In some cases, CAGs may be self-selecting individuals who believe they represent the diverse interests of their community. Individuals may nominate themselves.
- The local government could select, in a fair and open manner, members of the community to serve on the CAG.
- EPA, with the involved State and local governments, could assist the community in organizing a Screening Panel to review nominations for CAG membership. EPA could review (not approve/disapprove) the Panel's list of

nominees and offer advice, as needed, to ensure all community interests are represented.

- EPA, with the appropriate State and local governments, could select a Core Group that represents the diverse interests of the community. Members of this Core Group then could select the remaining members of the CAG in a fair and open manner.

The key to member selection is to ensure that the CAG fully represents the community and will be able to function effectively as a group.

What are the roles and responsibilities of CAG members?

CAG members are expected to participate in CAG meetings, provide information to EPA on site issues, and share information with their fellow community members. They must be prepared to fairly and honestly represent not only their own personal views but also those of the community members they represent.

CAG members may select a Chairperson from within their ranks and determine an appropriate term of office. The primary functions of the CAG Chairperson are to conduct CAG meetings in a manner that encourages open and constructive participation by all members; to ensure that all pertinent community concerns are raised for consideration and discussion; and to attempt, whenever possible, to achieve consensus among CAG members.

EPA, as the lead Agency, will provide the CAG with information and technical expertise on site cleanup and facilitate discussion of issues and concerns relative to Superfund actions. The Agency will listen and respond to views expressed by CAG members, giving them substantial consideration when making site decisions, especially when views are shared by most or all CAG members.

How do CAGs Operate?

Each CAG should develop a Mission Statement describing the CAG's specific purpose, scope, goals, and objectives. Each CAG also should develop a set of procedures to guide day-to-day operations. These procedures should address such topics as how to fill membership vacancies; how often to hold meetings; and the process for reviewing and commenting on documents and other materials.

What are CAG meetings like?

CAG meetings should be open to the public. The meetings should be announced publicly (via display ads in newspapers,

flyers, etc.) well enough in advance to encourage maximum participation of CAG and community members. CAG members should determine the frequency and location of CAG meetings based on the needs of the site. The format for CAG meetings can vary depending on the needs of the CAG. A basic meeting format might include an update on site status by the project's technical staff; discussion of current issues; a question/answer session that includes audience participation; review of "action items," and discussion of the next meeting's agenda.

What kind of administrative support is available for the CAG?

EPA, together with State, local government, local universities and others, may assist the CAG with administrative support on issues relevant to the Superfund site cleanup and decision-making process. This support may include support for arranging and documenting meetings, preparing and distributing meeting notices and agendas, duplicating site-related documents for CAG review, maintaining CAG mailing/distribution lists, and providing translation and meeting facilitation services when needed. If meeting facilitation is needed, a neutral facilitator is particularly effective at sites where some controversy is anticipated.

What type of training and support is available to CAG members?

EPA, State and local government, agencies, local universities and others could provide training, prepare briefing materials, and conduct site tours for new CAG members and others who could benefit from such training.

Next Steps

If you are interested in the formation of a CAG, please complete the enclosed questionnaire. A small meeting will then be scheduled to discuss possible options and ideas for how the CAG can be established and how it will function.

If you have any other questions, are interested in having EPA do a presentation about the AMCO Superfund site for a group, or would like EPA to attend a small informational meeting, please contact Leana Rosetti (see back).



AMCO Chemical Superfund Site

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Information Repositories

Information about the AMCO Chemical Superfund site can be found at:

West Oakland Branch Library

1801 Adeline St.
Oakland, CA 94617
Phone: (510) 238-7352



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United States Environmental Protection Agency
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