

U. S. Steel Gary Works  
RCRA Corrective Action  
Glossary of Terms

**Agency.** The Agency is the governmental office that is responsible to see that the cleanup of a site is carried out following the appropriate laws and regulations.

**Characterization.** A determination of the chemicals or constituents present in groundwater, soil, or air; how far they extend; and in what concentration.

**Cleanup.** Actions taken to deal with a release or threat of release of a hazardous substance that could affect humans or the environment. Synonyms: remedial action, removal action, response action, or corrective action, abatement, or remediation.

**Consent Order.** A legal document signed by U.S. EPA and an individual, business, or other entity, committing that entity to take corrective action or refrain from an activity. The Consent Order describes the actions to be taken and can be enforced in court. RCRA Corrective Action activities being conducted by U. S. Steel at Gary Works are done under a Consent Order between U. S. Steel and the U.S. EPA, issued by U.S. EPA on October 23, 1998.

**Contaminant.** Contaminant means any chemical, material, substance or waste: (a) Which is regulated under any applicable federal, state or local law or regulation; (b) Which is classified as hazardous or toxic under federal, state or local law or regulation; or (c) To which exposure is regulated under federal, state or local law or regulation. Also: any substance that is inadvertently introduced to the environment (or to other media) that has the potential to have undesirable effects; an impurity.

**Contamination.** Introduction into water, air and soil of microorganisms, chemicals, toxic substances, wastes, or wastewater in a concentration that makes the medium unfit for its next intended use. Also applies to surfaces of objects, buildings and various household and agricultural use products.

**Corrective Action.** A process prescribed by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) for investigating, selecting alternative remedies, and cleaning up a RCRA hazardous waste site.

**Corrective Measures Implementation (CMI).** The design and implementation of clean-up measures at a RCRA hazardous waste site.

**Corrective Measures Study (CMS).** A study that identifies contamination and suitable technologies to clean-up a RCRA hazardous waste site.

**Dredging.** Removal of mud from the bottom of water bodies.

**Ecological Impact.** The effect that a man-caused or natural activity has on living organisms and their non-living (abiotic) environment.

**Exposure.** The amount of radiation or pollutant present in a given environment that represents a potential health threat to living organisms.

**Groundwater.** The supply of fresh water found beneath the earth's surface, usually in aquifers, which supply wells and springs.

**Information Repository.** Locations where the public may view files containing current and historical information, technical reports, and reference documents concerning a RCRA hazardous waste site.

**Interim Measures.** Certain initial corrective action steps taken before the final corrective measures implementation at a RCRA hazardous waste site.

**Public Involvement Plan (PIP).** A document that provides a community-specific plan for interacting with a community regarding the permitting or corrective action activities at a RCRA hazardous waste site.

**RCRA Facility Investigation (RFI).** A study that examines the nature and extent of contamination at a facility regulated under RCRA.

**Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976.** The federal law that regulates management and disposal of solid and hazardous waste. The full history of the law includes the Solid Waste Disposal Act, as amended by the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976, as further amended by the Hazardous and Solid Waste Amendments of 1984, and the Federal Facility Compliance Act of 1992, 42 U.S.C. Sec. 6901 et seq.. [Click here for U.S. EPA's list of Frequently Asked Questions about RCRA.](#)

**Risk.** A measure of the probability that damage to life, health, property and/or the environment will occur as a result of a given hazard.

**Risk Assessment.** A scientific determination of the kind and degree of potential risks resulting from the presence of a chemical compound or mixture of compounds in the environment. A risk assessment usually addresses the possible risks to both human health and the environment.

**United States Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA).** The federal agency responsible for the regulation of hazardous waste and for the administration of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 (RCRA). [Click here for U.S. EPA's RCRA web site.](#)

**Work Plan.** A document describing in detail the activities required to complete a specific scope of work (e.g., site investigation).