



Department of Environmental Protection

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Tips on PIPS: Understanding and Using the Public Involvement Processes

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The Massachusetts Contingency Plan (MCP) provides two levels of public involvement. At all sites, information is provided about the status of actions taken to assess and clean up a site, the risks posed by the site, and opportunities for public involvement. When the public indicates an interest in getting more involved, there is a process offered both for preliminary response actions [Immediate Response Actions (IRAs) and Release Abatement Measures (RAMs)] and comprehensive response actions [Tier Classified sites].

Public Involvement In IRAs and RAMs

If there is an IRA or RAM going on at a site you are interested in, you may submit a petition to become involved in that action. To see if such actions are occurring, and obtain needed site/action information, see [Sites and Locations](#) .

- The petition should state that "We the undersigned request involvement in the [Immediate Response Action or Release Abatement Measure] taking place at [Site Name, Street Address, Town, DEP Release Tracking Number], under the provisions of 310 CMR 40.1403(9)."
- The petition must be signed by 10 or more residents of the community in which the site is located, or by at least 1 local official. It should include the signature(s), clearly printed names and addresses, and phone numbers for each petitioner.
- For Immediate Response Actions (IRAs) the petitions should be sent the appropriate DEP Regional Office and copied to the party conducting the IRA. If DEP is overseeing the IRA, then DEP will contact the petitioners. If not, then the party conducting the IRA is obligated to contact the petitioners. For Release Abatement Measures (RAMs), the petitions should be sent directly to the party conducting the RAM and copied to the DEP Regional Office.
- Once the petition is received, either the party conducting the action or DEP must contact the lead petitioner. If people want one, a public meeting must be held to discuss the action. A public comment period must be also held on the action and any comments received must be responded to in writing.

This information is available in alternate format. Contact Michelle Waters-Ekanem, Director of Diversity/Civil Rights at 617-292-5751.

TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370

MassDEP Website: www.mass.gov/dep

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PIP Sites

Once a site becomes Tier Classified and starts going through the comprehensive phased MCP cleanup process, the public may petition for it to be designated as a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) Site. The community can decide to submit the petition at any point in the cleanup process following Tier Classification, up until the site reaches closure by submitting a Permanent or Temporary Solution Statement:

- The petition should state "We the undersigned request that the [Site Name, Street Address, Town, DEP Release Tracking Number] be designated as a Public Involvement Plan Site under the provisions of M.G.L. c. 21E and the Massachusetts Contingency Plan, 310 CMR 40.1400." (see Site Lists for needed information),
- The petition must be signed by 10 or more residents of the community in which the site is located, or in a community potentially affected by the site. It must include the signatures, clearly printed names and addresses, and phone numbers for each petitioner.
- The petitions must be sent to the party conducting the cleanup and copied to the DEP Regional Office . The petition should be sent by registered or certified mail so you have a record of when it was received.
- Once the petition is received, all Tier Classified sites will be designated as PIP sites and the party conducting the cleanup must send a letter to each of the petitioners providing confirmation in this regard within 20 calendar days of their receipt of the petition.
- Within 60 calendar days of responding to the petitioners, a draft Public Involvement Plan must be prepared and presented at a public meeting, along with an update on the status of the site. Community interviews must be conducted in order to determine what the community feels is appropriate to be in the Plan, and a public comment period must be held on it following the public meeting. Any comments received during the comment period must be reviewed, considered and responded to in writing. The Plan must then be finalized and implemented throughout the remainder of the cleanup process.