

# Best Practice Tips for SRP Grantees: How to Gain and Maintain Access to Superfund Sites

## Executive Summary

The intent of this document is to provide you with best practices for establishing and maintaining constructive working relationships with officials at hazardous waste sites. The document focuses on National Priorities List (Superfund) sites, but also offers suggestions that will be useful at other hazardous waste sites. The SRP believes that conducting work at these sites can help grantees test or apply research or community engagement tools in real-world, field conditions and can accelerate the longer-term, broader application of innovative science.

The document outlines six steps to establishing site access and maintaining a productive working relationship with the site manager:

1. Consider key requirements: Be aware of EPA requirements such as safety training and insurance documentation.
2. Find a site: Carefully consider the criteria to find a site best suited for your project. EPA Web tools and EPA, ATSDR, and other agency staff can provide information to find a site.
3. Identify the appropriate site contact: If the hazardous waste site is managed by EPA or another federal agency, begin by contacting the EPA Regional Office, specifically the regional Science and Technology Liaison (STL). The STL will contact the Remedial Project Manager (RPM) for the site. For other sites, you should contact the entity that is responsible for the site (e.g., the state or tribe).
4. Discuss and document the plan: Be willing to share the details of your project plan and listen carefully to the site team. It is important for both you and the EPA site manager that all discussions and decisions are documented.
5. Establish and maintain continuous communication as agreed upon with the site manager: Make the effort to provide consistent, clear communication. This can foster a positive working relationship and prevent misunderstandings.
6. Notify the EPA site manager and other EPA staff that you have worked with when SRP site activities are ending: Make sure the site team is aware that your activities are nearing completion. Document the outcomes – highlight what was learned and the next steps.

The document also provides insight on items that you should consider throughout your project. Each relates to the importance of consistent, clear communication. Please be mindful of the site manager's roles and responsibilities and be prepared to take the responsibility for establishing and maintaining effective communication practices.

*This document was prepared by the SRP in cooperation with EPA and ATSDR participants on the Research to Risk Assessment (R2RA) Interagency work group. The SRP would like to express appreciation for their input and support.*