



1.3 HEER OFFICE ORGANIZATION

The mission of the HEER Office is to protect human health, public welfare, and the environment and provide state leadership, support and partnership in preventing, planning for, responding to, and enforcing environmental laws relating to releases or threats of releases of hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants. The HEER Office is one of seven division-level offices organized under the Environmental Health Administration of the HDOH. These seven division-level offices are described in Section 1.4. To help accomplish its mission, the HEER Office is divided into four primary technical sections that are listed below and described in the following sections (also see Functional Areas Chart in Appendix 1-A).

- Emergency Preparedness & Response (EP&R) Section
- Site Discovery, Assessment, and Remediation (SDAR) Section
- Hazard Evaluation Section
- Planning Section

1.3.1 Emergency Preparedness & Response (EP&R) Section

The EP&R Section is responsible for planning and preparing for, and responding to hazardous substance releases that may cause immediate and substantial threats to human health or the environment. EP&R has authority given in the HERL (HRS 128D), the Hawai'i SCP (HAR 11-451), and the HEPCRA (HRS 128E) to provide for or coordinate timely and effective hazardous substance release response and hazardous substance reporting.

This section of the HEER Office also focuses on emergency preparedness training exercises for emergency response actions. The EP&R Section's State On-Scene Coordinators (SOSCs) work closely with first responders, State Civil Defense, and other federal, state, and county agencies to help strengthen the state's ability to respond to hazardous substance release emergencies. EP&R staff also provide administrative support and/or technical assistance for the Hawai'i State Emergency Response Commission (HSERC) and the Local (county level) Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs). The annual Tier II reports (and fees) required under HEPCRA for facilities that exceed specified threshold planning quantities of



covered hazardous substances are collected and documented by the EP&R staff. Emergency Preparedness and Response activities of the HEER Office are described in additional detail in Sections 2.3 and 20.1.

1.3.2 Site Discovery, Assessment, and Remediation (SDAR) Section

The largest section within the HEER Office is SDAR; most of the guidance described in this TGM is carried out under the oversight of the SDAR Section. This section has responsibility for oversight of all sites identified through release notification, sites in voluntary cleanup programs, or sites discovered through any other means - after any initial emergency response has been completed. The section's oversight responsibilities include the review of site assessments and draft/final site remediation documents by responsible parties to ensure that the environmental work meets legal requirements and results in site conditions that will be protective of human health and the environment. The section's staff is composed of Remedial Project Managers (RPMs) working on sites within six separate programs, which are described below. Individual RPMs may work on sites in one or a number of these programs.

1.3.2.1 Site Discovery Program

The Site Discovery Program identifies and assesses sites that are contaminated or potentially contaminated, and managed under HEER Office jurisdiction. . Discovery of new sites may occur from various initiatives including:

- Targeted sampling of suspect contaminated sites to determine presence or absence of significant contamination
- Assessment and site inspections funded by and coordinated with USEPA under the federal CERCLA program
- Investigations generated by release reporting
- Investigations of public reports or media reports regarding hazardous substances
- Sites where owners/operators apply for and/or participate in voluntary investigation or cleanup programs such as Fast



Track Cleanups (see Section 15) or the Voluntary Response Program (see Section 20.3).

- Follow-up on referrals from other government agencies

1.3.2.2 State Sites Program

Many of the sites overseen by the SDAR section fall in the “State Sites” category: non-military sites, including those participating in a specific voluntary cleanup program such as the Fast Track Cleanup Program, Brownfields Program, or the Voluntary Response Program (described below). The RPMs in this program generally request and receive voluntary cooperation of the responsible party for the site. RPMs typically request that a site assessment be conducted, and then evaluate the site assessment report. If significant contamination is found through the site assessment (e.g. hazardous substance levels exceeding the HEER Office Environmental Action Levels (EALs)), then follow-up work is requested to conduct further assessment or develop and carry out site cleanup.

1.3.2.3 Fast Track Cleanup Program

The Fast Track Cleanup Program enables owners/operators of certain contaminated sites or potentially contaminated sites to conduct voluntary investigation or removal cleanups under an agreement with the HEER Office. Participants can move forward to investigation summaries or cleanup actions without the submittal of multiple work plans and interim report submittals, thereby streamlining and expediting site closures for removal action sites. Project status reviews and updates are generally conducted with HDOH through meetings or presentations, as needed.

Those interested in participating in the Fast Track Cleanup Program must first be screened for eligibility and attend a “scoping” meeting. Participation officially begins with the completion of an application and agreement form. See Section 15 for full details regarding the Fast Track Cleanup Program.

1.3.2.4 Brownfields Program

The Brownfields Program helps to facilitate voluntary assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment of brownfields properties. These are properties that are abandoned or underutilized due to real or perceived environmental issues associated with the property.



The RPMs in this program provide:

- Oversight of site assessments and cleanup of brownfields sites
- Technical assistance to brownfields developers regarding cleanup options
- Support for non-profits and state/county agencies in applying for USEPA brownfields grants
- Assistance to the counties to develop an inventory of brownfields sites

See section 20.2 for additional information on the Brownfields Program.

1.3.2.5 Voluntary Response Program

The Voluntary Response Program (VRP) encourages voluntary cleanup of contaminated properties. The HERL was amended in 1997 to include this voluntary program for the state of Hawai'i. Under the law, HDOH has the authority to grant prospective purchasers or developers an exemption from future hazardous substance liability if cleanup is performed to HEER Office specifications under this program. Past, current, or future property owners can participate in the VRP, however liability exemptions can only be given to prospective purchasers or tenants. RPMs working in this program provide oversight for the site assessments and remediation activities, with completion documented via a Letter of Completion (LOC) issued by HDOH and a UECA covenant noted to the property deed, if necessary.

The cost of the HEER Office oversight (charge for hours of RPM oversight) is borne by the responsible party under the terms of the VRP Agreement. VRP sites are normally given a dedicated RPM who is required to respond to investigation and remediation reports in less than 30 days. Section 20.3 provides more detailed information on the VRP. Information regarding the VRP can also be found on the HEER Office website.

1.3.2.6 DoD State Memorandum of Agreement Program (DSMOA)

RPMs working in the DSMOA program provide oversight for assessments and cleanups of Department of Defense (DoD) sites. Although the DoD is the lead responsible agency for cleanup



decisions on CERCLA-regulated sites under the agreement, DoD funds the DSMOA program RPM positions to provide:

- Technical review, comments, and recommendations on DoD documents
- Identification and explanation of State applicable or relevant and appropriate requirements (ARARs)
- Oversight and decisions on DoD sites involving petroleum contamination only (regulated under the Hawaii SCP)
- Site visits; involvement in public education and participation activities; and participation in technical review committees

Section 20.4 gives additional detail on the DSMOA program

1.3.3 Hazard Evaluation Section

The Hazard Evaluation Section of the HEER Office provides human health and ecological risk assessment evaluation and support for the HEER Office as well as other sections within the Environmental Management Division. Hazard Evaluation staff also provide toxicological assessments of chemical threats to human health, establish appropriate cleanup levels for chemical contamination, and assist the public with information concerning the health effects of chemicals. This section works on a variety of specific studies and projects related to chemical hazards in Hawai'i, including the responsibility for collecting and monitoring reports of pesticide and heavy metal poisoning under Title 11, Chapter 5, HAR, Environmentally-Related Illness and Injury Reporting.

1.3.4 Planning Section

The Planning Section within the HEER Office serves to support the entire office in the areas of long-term planning, program development, financial reporting, data management, logistical support, and legislative expertise. The Planning Section assists in identifying resource and training needs to ensure that HEER Office staff have appropriate tools and training to perform their jobs. A major objective of the Planning Section is to assist the other sections, and to have in place regulations, policies, databases, and procedures for responding to information requests or reports of releases of hazardous substances, pollutants, or contaminants.