

(Pub. L. 96-510, title I, §116, as added Pub. L. 99-499, title I, §116, Oct. 17, 1986, 100 Stat. 1653.)

### Editorial Notes

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in subsec. (a), was in the original "this Act", meaning Pub. L. 96-510, Dec. 11, 1980, 94 Stat. 2767, known as the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 9601 of this title and Tables.

### § 9617. Public participation

#### (a) Proposed plan

Before adoption of any plan for remedial action to be undertaken by the President, by a State, or by any other person, under section 9604, 9606, 9620, or 9622 of this title, the President or State, as appropriate, shall take both of the following actions:

(1) Publish a notice and brief analysis of the proposed plan and make such plan available to the public.

(2) Provide a reasonable opportunity for submission of written and oral comments and an opportunity for a public meeting at or near the facility at issue regarding the proposed plan and regarding any proposed findings under section 9621(d)(4) of this title (relating to cleanup standards). The President or the State shall keep a transcript of the meeting and make such transcript available to the public.

The notice and analysis published under paragraph (1) shall include sufficient information as may be necessary to provide a reasonable explanation of the proposed plan and alternative proposals considered.

#### (b) Final plan

Notice of the final remedial action plan adopted shall be published and the plan shall be made available to the public before commencement of any remedial action. Such final plan shall be accompanied by a discussion of any significant changes (and the reasons for such changes) in the proposed plan and a response to each of the significant comments, criticisms, and new data submitted in written or oral presentations under subsection (a).

#### (c) Explanation of differences

After adoption of a final remedial action plan—

- (1) if any remedial action is taken,
- (2) if any enforcement action under section 9606 of this title is taken, or
- (3) if any settlement or consent decree under section 9606 of this title or section 9622 of this title is entered into,

and if such action, settlement, or decree differs in any significant respects from the final plan, the President or the State shall publish an explanation of the significant differences and the reasons such changes were made.

#### (d) Publication

For the purposes of this section, publication shall include, at a minimum, publication in a

major local newspaper of general circulation. In addition, each item developed, received, published, or made available to the public under this section shall be available for public inspection and copying at or near the facility at issue.

#### (e) Grants for technical assistance

##### (1) Authority

Subject to such amounts as are provided in appropriations Acts and in accordance with rules promulgated by the President, the President may make grants available to any group of individuals which may be affected by a release or threatened release at any facility which is listed on the National Priorities List under the National Contingency Plan. Such grants may be used to obtain technical assistance in interpreting information with regard to the nature of the hazard, remedial investigation and feasibility study, record of decision, remedial design, selection and construction of remedial action, operation and maintenance, or removal action at such facility.

##### (2) Amount

The amount of any grant under this subsection may not exceed \$50,000 for a single grant recipient. The President may waive the \$50,000 limitation in any case where such waiver is necessary to carry out the purposes of this subsection. Each grant recipient shall be required, as a condition of the grant, to contribute at least 20 percent of the total of costs of the technical assistance for which such grant is made. The President may waive the 20 percent contribution requirement if the grant recipient demonstrates financial need and such waiver is necessary to facilitate public participation in the selection of remedial action at the facility. Not more than one grant may be made under this subsection with respect to a single facility, but the grant may be renewed to facilitate public participation at all stages of remedial action.

(Pub. L. 96-510, title I, §117, as added Pub. L. 99-499, title I, §117, Oct. 17, 1986, 100 Stat. 1654.)

### § 9618. High priority for drinking water supplies

For purposes of taking action under section 9604 or 9606 of this title and listing facilities on the National Priorities List, the President shall give a high priority to facilities where the release of hazardous substances or pollutants or contaminants has resulted in the closing of drinking water wells or has contaminated a principal drinking water supply.

(Pub. L. 96-510, title I, §118, as added Pub. L. 99-499, title I, §118(a), Oct. 17, 1986, 100 Stat. 1655.)

### § 9619. Response action contractors

#### (a) Liability of response action contractors

##### (1) Response action contractors

A person who is a response action contractor with respect to any release or threatened release of a hazardous substance or pollutant or contaminant from a vessel or facility shall not be liable under this subchapter or under any other Federal law to any person for injuries,

costs, damages, expenses, or other liability (including but not limited to claims for indemnification or contribution and claims by third parties for death, personal injury, illness or loss of or damage to property or economic loss) which results from such release or threatened release.

**(2) Negligence, etc.**

Paragraph (1) shall not apply in the case of a release that is caused by conduct of the response action contractor which is negligent, grossly negligent, or which constitutes intentional misconduct.

**(3) Effect on warranties; employer liability**

Nothing in this subsection shall affect the liability of any person under any warranty under Federal, State, or common law. Nothing in this subsection shall affect the liability of an employer who is a response action contractor to any employee of such employer under any provision of law, including any provision of any law relating to worker's compensation.

**(4) Governmental employees**

A state employee or an employee of a political subdivision who provides services relating to response action while acting within the scope of his authority as a governmental employee shall have the same exemption from liability (subject to the other provisions of this section) as is provided to the response action contractor under this section.

**(b) Savings provisions**

**(1) Liability of other persons**

The defense provided by section 9607(b)(3) of this title shall not be available to any potentially responsible party with respect to any costs or damages caused by any act or omission of a response action contractor. Except as provided in subsection (a)(4) and the preceding sentence, nothing in this section shall affect the liability under this chapter or under any other Federal or State law of any person, other than a response action contractor.

**(2) Burden of plaintiff**

Nothing in this section shall affect the plaintiff's burden of establishing liability under this subchapter.

**(c) Indemnification**

**(1) In general**

The President may agree to hold harmless and indemnify any response action contractor meeting the requirements of this subsection against any liability (including the expenses of litigation or settlement) for negligence arising out of the contractor's performance in carrying out response action activities under this subchapter, unless such liability was caused by conduct of the contractor which was grossly negligent or which constituted intentional misconduct.

**(2) Applicability**

This subsection shall apply only with respect to a response action carried out under written agreement with—

(A) the President;

(B) any Federal agency;

(C) a State or political subdivision which has entered into a contract or cooperative agreement in accordance with section 9604(d)(1) of this title; or

(D) any potentially responsible party carrying out any agreement under section 9622 of this title (relating to settlements) or section 9606 of this title (relating to abatement).

**(3) Source of funding**

This subsection shall not be subject to section 1301 or 1341 of title 31 or section 6301(a) and (b) of title 41 or to section 9662 of this title. For purposes of section 9611 of this title, amounts expended pursuant to this subsection for indemnification of any response action contractor (except with respect to federally owned or operated facilities) shall be considered governmental response costs incurred pursuant to section 9604 of this title. If sufficient funds are unavailable in the Hazardous Substance Superfund established under subchapter A of chapter 98 of title 26 to make payments pursuant to such indemnification or if the Fund is repealed, there are authorized to be appropriated such amounts as may be necessary to make such payments.

**(4) Requirements**

An indemnification agreement may be provided under this subsection only if the President determines that each of the following requirements are met:

(A) The liability covered by the indemnification agreement exceeds or is not covered by insurance available, at a fair and reasonable price, to the contractor at the time the contractor enters into the contract to provide response action, and adequate insurance to cover such liability is not generally available at the time the response action contract is entered into.

(B) The response action contractor has made diligent efforts to obtain insurance coverage from non-Federal sources to cover such liability.

(C) In the case of a response action contract covering more than one facility, the response action contractor agrees to continue to make such diligent efforts each time the contractor begins work under the contract at a new facility.

**(5) Limitations**

**(A) Liability covered**

Indemnification under this subsection shall apply only to response action contractor liability which results from a release of any hazardous substance or pollutant or contaminant if such release arises out of response action activities.

**(B) Deductibles and limits**

An indemnification agreement under this subsection shall include deductibles and shall place limits on the amount of indemnification to be made available.

**(C) Contracts with potentially responsible parties**

**(i) Decision to indemnify**

In deciding whether to enter into an indemnification agreement with a response action contractor carrying out a written contract or agreement with any potentially responsible party, the President shall determine an amount which the potentially responsible party is able to indemnify the contractor. The President may enter into such an indemnification agreement only if the President determines that such amount of indemnification is inadequate to cover any reasonable potential liability of the contractor arising out of the contractor's negligence in performing the contract or agreement with such party. The President shall make the determinations in the preceding sentences (with respect to the amount and the adequacy of the amount) taking into account the total net assets and resources of potentially responsible parties with respect to the facility at the time of such determinations.

**(ii) Conditions**

The President may pay a claim under an indemnification agreement referred to in clause (i) for the amount determined under clause (i) only if the contractor has exhausted all administrative, judicial, and common law claims for indemnification against all potentially responsible parties participating in the clean-up of the facility with respect to the liability of the contractor arising out of the contractor's negligence in performing the contract or agreement with such party. Such indemnification agreement shall require such contractor to pay any deductible established under subparagraph (B) before the contractor may recover any amount from the potentially responsible party or under the indemnification agreement.

**(D) RCRA facilities**

No owner or operator of a facility regulated under the Solid Waste Disposal Act [42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.] may be indemnified under this subsection with respect to such facility.

**(E) Persons retained or hired**

A person retained or hired by a person described in subsection (e)(2)(B) shall be eligible for indemnification under this subsection only if the President specifically approves of the retaining or hiring of such person.

**(6) Cost recovery**

For purposes of section 9607 of this title, amounts expended pursuant to this subsection for indemnification of any person who is a response action contractor with respect to any release or threatened release shall be considered a cost of response incurred by the United States Government with respect to such release.

**(7) Regulations**

The President shall promulgate regulations for carrying out the provisions of this sub-

section. Before promulgation of the regulations, the President shall develop guidelines to carry out this section. Development of such guidelines shall include reasonable opportunity for public comment.

**(8) Study**

The Comptroller General shall conduct a study in the fiscal year ending September 30, 1989, on the application of this subsection, including whether indemnification agreements under this subsection are being used, the number of claims that have been filed under such agreements, and the need for this subsection. The Comptroller General shall report the findings of the study to Congress no later than September 30, 1989.

**(d) Exception**

The exemption provided under subsection (a) and the authority of the President to offer indemnification under subsection (c) shall not apply to any person covered by the provisions of paragraph (1), (2), (3), or (4) of section 9607(a) of this title with respect to the release or threatened release concerned if such person would be covered by such provisions even if such person had not carried out any actions referred to in subsection (e) of this section.

**(e) Definitions**

For purposes of this section—

**(1) Response action contract**

The term "response action contract" means any written contract or agreement entered into by a response action contractor (as defined in paragraph (2)(A) of this subsection) with—

(A) the President;

(B) any Federal agency;

(C) a State or political subdivision which has entered into a contract or cooperative agreement in accordance with section 9604(d)(1) of this title; or

(D) any potentially responsible party carrying out an agreement under section 9606 or 9622 of this title;

to provide any remedial action under this chapter at a facility listed on the National Priorities List, or any removal under this chapter, with respect to any release or threatened release of a hazardous substance or pollutant or contaminant from the facility or to provide any evaluation, planning, engineering, surveying and mapping, design, construction, equipment, or any ancillary services thereto for such facility.

**(2) Response action contractor**

The term "response action contractor" means—

(A) any—

(i) person who enters into a response action contract with respect to any release or threatened release of a hazardous substance or pollutant or contaminant from a facility and is carrying out such contract; and<sup>1</sup>

(ii) person, public or nonprofit private entity, conducting a field demonstration

<sup>1</sup> So in original. The word "and" probably should not appear.

pursuant to section 9660(b) of this title; and

(iii) Recipients<sup>2</sup> of grants (including subgrantees) under section 9660a.<sup>3</sup> of this title for the training and education of workers who are or may be engaged in activities related to hazardous waste removal, containment, or emergency response under this chapter; and<sup>1</sup>

(B) any person who is retained or hired by a person described in subparagraph (A) to provide any services relating to a response action; and

(C) any surety who after October 16, 1990, provides a bid, performance or payment bond to a response action contractor, and begins activities to meet its obligations under such bond, but only in connection with such activities or obligations.

### (3) Insurance

The term “insurance” means liability insurance which is fair and reasonably priced, as determined by the President, and which is made available at the time the contractor enters into the response action contract to provide response action.

### (f) Competition

Response action contractors and subcontractors for program management, construction management, architectural and engineering, surveying and mapping, and related services shall be selected in accordance with title IX of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949.<sup>3</sup> The Federal selection procedures shall apply to appropriate contracts negotiated by all Federal governmental agencies involved in carrying out this chapter. Such procedures shall be followed by response action contractors and subcontractors.

### (g) Surety bonds

(1) If under sections 3131 and 3133 of title 40, surety bonds are required for any direct Federal procurement of any response action contract and are not waived pursuant to section 3134 of title 40, they shall be issued in accordance with sections 3131 and 3133 of title 40.

(2) If under applicable Federal law surety bonds are required for any direct Federal procurement of any response action contract, no right of action shall accrue on the performance bond issued on such response action contract to or for the use of any person other than the obligee named in the bond.

(3) If under applicable Federal law surety bonds are required for any direct Federal procurement of any response action contract, unless otherwise provided for by the procuring agency in the bond, in the event of a default, the surety's liability on a performance bond shall be only for the cost of completion of the contract work in accordance with the plans and specifications less the balance of funds remaining to be paid under the contract, up to the penal sum of the bond. The surety shall in no event be liable on bonds to indemnify or compensate the obligee for loss or liability arising from personal in-

jury or property damage whether or not caused by a breach of the bonded contract.

(4) Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as preempting, limiting, superseding, affecting, applying to, or modifying any State laws, regulations, requirements, rules, practices or procedures. Nothing in this subsection shall be construed as affecting, applying to, modifying, limiting, superseding, or preempting any rights, authorities, liabilities, demands, actions, causes of action, losses, judgments, claims, statutes of limitation, or obligations under Federal or State law, which do not arise on or under the bond.

(5) This subsection shall not apply to bonds executed before October 17, 1990.

(Pub. L. 96-510, title I, §119, as added Pub. L. 99-499, title I, §119, Oct. 17, 1986, 100 Stat. 1662; amended Pub. L. 99-514, §2, Oct. 22, 1986, 100 Stat. 2095; Pub. L. 100-202, §101(f) [title II, §201], Dec. 22, 1987, 101 Stat. 1329-187, 1329-198; Pub. L. 101-584, §1, Nov. 15, 1990, 104 Stat. 2872; Pub. L. 102-484, div. A, title III, §331(a), Oct. 23, 1992, 106 Stat. 2373; Pub. L. 105-276, title III, Oct. 21, 1998, 112 Stat. 2497.)

### Editorial Notes

#### REFERENCES IN TEXT

This chapter, referred to in subsecs. (b)(1), (e)(1), (2)(A)(iii), and (f), was in the original “this Act”, meaning Pub. L. 96-510, Dec. 11, 1980, 94 Stat. 2767, known as the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act of 1980, which is classified principally to this chapter. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 9601 of this title and Tables.

The Solid Waste Disposal Act, referred to in subsec. (c)(5)(D), is title II of Pub. L. 89-272, Oct. 20, 1965, 79 Stat. 997, as amended generally by Pub. L. 94-580, §2, Oct. 21, 1976, 90 Stat. 2795, which is classified generally to chapter 82 (§6901 et seq.) of this title. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Short Title note set out under section 6901 of this title and Tables.

Section 9660a of this title, referred to in subsec. (e)(2)(A)(iii), was in the original “section 126” probably meaning section 126 of Pub. L. 99-499, title I, Oct. 17, 1986, 100 Stat. 1690. Subsecs. (a) to (f) of section 126, which relate to worker protection standards, are set out as a note under section 655 of Title 29, Labor. Subsec. (g) of section 126, which relates to grants for training and education of workers who are or may be engaged in activities related to hazardous waste removal, etc., is classified to section 9660a of this title.

The Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, referred to in subsec. (f), is act June 30, 1949, ch. 288, 63 Stat. 377. Title IX of the Act, which was classified generally to subchapter VI (§541 et seq.) of chapter 10 of former Title 40, Public Buildings, Property, and Works, was repealed and reenacted by Pub. L. 107-217, §§1, 6(b), Aug. 21, 2002, 116 Stat. 1062, 1304, as chapter 11 (§1101 et seq.) of Title 40, Public Buildings, Property, and Works. For disposition of sections of former Title 40 to revised Title 40, see Table preceding section 101 of Title 40. For complete classification of this Act to the Code, see Tables.

#### CODIFICATION

In subsec. (c)(3), “section 6301(a) and (b) of title 41” substituted for “section 3732 of the Revised Statutes (41 U.S.C. 11)” on authority of Pub. L. 111-350, §6(c), Jan. 4, 2011, 124 Stat. 3854, which Act enacted Title 41, Public Contracts.

In subsec. (g)(1), “sections 3131 and 3133 of title 40” substituted for “the Act of August 24, 1935 (40 U.S.C.

<sup>2</sup> So in original. Probably should not be capitalized.

<sup>3</sup> See References in Text note below.

270a–270d), commonly referred to as the ‘Miller Act’ and for ‘such Act of August 24, 1935’ and ‘section 3134 of title 40’ substituted for ‘the Act of April 29, 1941 (40 U.S.C. 270e–270f)’, on authority of Pub. L. 107–217, §5(c), Aug. 21, 2002, 116 Stat. 1303, the first section of which enacted Title 40, Public Buildings, Property, and Works.

#### AMENDMENTS

1998—Subsec. (e)(2)(C). Pub. L. 105–276 struck out ‘and before January 1, 1996,’ after ‘1990.’

Subsec. (g)(5). Pub. L. 105–276 struck out ‘, or after December 31, 1995’ before period at end.

1992—Subsec. (e)(2)(C). Pub. L. 102–484, §321(a)(1)(A), substituted ‘January 1, 1996,’ for ‘January 1, 1993’.

Subsec. (g)(1). Pub. L. 102–484, §331(a)(2), substituted ‘the Act of August 24, 1935 (40 U.S.C. 270a–270d), commonly referred to as the ‘Miller Act,’ for ‘the Miller Act, 40 U.S.C. sections 270a–270f,’ inserted ‘and are not waived pursuant to the Act of April 29, 1941 (40 U.S.C. 270e–270f),’ and substituted ‘in accordance with such Act of August 24, 1935.’ for ‘in accordance with 40 U.S.C. sections 270a–270d.’

Subsec. (g)(5). Pub. L. 102–484, §331(a)(1)(B), substituted ‘December 31, 1995’ for ‘December 31, 1992’.

1990—Subsec. (e)(2)(C). Pub. L. 101–584, §1(1), (2), added subpar. (C).

Subsec. (g). Pub. L. 101–584, §1(3), added subsec. (g).

1987—Subsec. (e)(2)(A)(iii). Pub. L. 100–202 added cl. (iii).

1986—Subsec. (c)(3). Pub. L. 99–514 substituted ‘Internal Revenue Code of 1986’ for ‘Internal Revenue Code of 1954’, which for purposes of codification was translated as ‘title 26’ thus requiring no change in text.

#### Statutory Notes and Related Subsidiaries

##### COORDINATION OF TITLES I TO IV OF PUB. L. 99–499

Any provision of titles I to IV of Pub. L. 99–499, imposing any tax, premium, or fee; establishing any trust fund; or authorizing expenditures from any trust fund, to have no force or effect, see section 531 of Pub. L. 99–499, set out as a note under section 1 of Title 26, Internal Revenue Code.

#### § 9620. Federal facilities

##### (a) Application of chapter to Federal Government

###### (1) In general

Each department, agency, and instrumentality of the United States (including the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government) shall be subject to, and comply with, this chapter in the same manner and to the same extent, both procedurally and substantively, as any nongovernmental entity, including liability under section 9607 of this title. Nothing in this section shall be construed to affect the liability of any person or entity under sections 9606 and 9607 of this title.

###### (2) Application of requirements to Federal facilities

All guidelines, rules, regulations, and criteria which are applicable to preliminary assessments carried out under this chapter for facilities at which hazardous substances are located, applicable to evaluations of such facilities under the National Contingency Plan, applicable to inclusion on the National Priorities List, or applicable to remedial actions at such facilities shall also be applicable to facilities which are owned or operated by a department, agency, or instrumentality of the

United States in the same manner and to the extent as such guidelines, rules, regulations, and criteria are applicable to other facilities. No department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States may adopt or utilize any such guidelines, rules, regulations, or criteria which are inconsistent with the guidelines, rules, regulations, and criteria established by the Administrator under this chapter.

##### (3) Exceptions

This subsection shall not apply to the extent otherwise provided in this section with respect to applicable time periods. This subsection shall also not apply to any requirements relating to bonding, insurance, or financial responsibility. Nothing in this chapter shall be construed to require a State to comply with section 9604(c)(3) of this title in the case of a facility which is owned or operated by any department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States.

##### (4) State laws

State laws concerning removal and remedial action, including State laws regarding enforcement, shall apply to removal and remedial action at facilities owned or operated by a department, agency, or instrumentality of the United States or facilities that are the subject of a deferral under subsection (h)(3)(C) when such facilities are not included on the National Priorities List. The preceding sentence shall not apply to the extent a State law would apply any standard or requirement to such facilities which is more stringent than the standards and requirements applicable to facilities which are not owned or operated by any such department, agency, or instrumentality.

##### (b) Notice

Each department, agency, and instrumentality of the United States shall add to the inventory of Federal agency hazardous waste facilities required to be submitted under section 3016 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act [42 U.S.C. 6937] (in addition to the information required under section 3016(a)(3) of such Act [42 U.S.C. 6937(a)(3)]) information on contamination from each facility owned or operated by the department, agency, or instrumentality if such contamination affects contiguous or adjacent property owned by the department, agency, or instrumentality or by any other person, including a description of the monitoring data obtained.

##### (c) Federal Agency Hazardous Waste Compliance Docket

The Administrator shall establish a special Federal Agency Hazardous Waste Compliance Docket (hereinafter in this section referred to as the ‘docket’) which shall contain each of the following:

(1) All information submitted under section 3016 of the Solid Waste Disposal Act [42 U.S.C. 6937] and subsection (b) of this section regarding any Federal facility and notice of each subsequent action taken under this chapter with respect to the facility.

(2) Information submitted by each department, agency, or instrumentality of the