

Chapter 1

Introduction

The Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Environment and Energy, Environmental Planning Division, has prepared this Handbook to assist the HUD field staff and local government officials who are responsible for implementing Part 51 as well as the private builders and developers who are affected by it. The Handbook is designed to meet two basic needs:

1. The need for a single reference source containing all the environmental criteria and standards contained in Part 51.
2. The need for explanatory and background material on the regulations, material that is normally only provided in either HUD training or through policy memos to HUD field offices. Neither local government officials nor private builders and developers receive such training and neither are part of the policy memo "loop."

We intend that this Handbook will be a permanent resource that will be expanded as new regulations are issued. It has been printed in a looseleaf fashion to make that easier.

The Handbook is composed of three sections:

1. Background material on the development of the regulations, the basis for standards contained in the regulations, and sources for materials necessary to implement the regulations.
2. An annotated copy of each regulation. The annotations include policy interpretations that have evolved since the regulations went into effect, clarifications of terms and wording based on questions raised by HUD field staff and others, and hints on implementation.
3. A clean copy of each regulation.

Supplements to each of these sections will be provided for each new regulation issued.

Users of this Handbook must realize that, despite the title of Part 51 (Environmental Criteria and Standards), these regulations do not contain all the environmental criteria and standards that must be considered in developing projects for HUD assistance. Part 51 contains only those criteria and standards that were developed specifically for HUD projects and which are Department-wide in effect. There are Federal statutes, executive orders, and other Federal agencies' regulations which also establish criteria and standards that must be considered. Handbooks for specific HUD program areas, such as single family housing, contain additional criteria and standards.

We would also like to point out that while the standards contained in the regulations are only binding on HUD assisted projects and actions, local governments may find them useful in evaluating other projects and in preparing local plans.

