

# NPL Site Narrative for Ellsworth Air Force Base

## ELLSWORTH AIR FORCE BASE Rapid City, South Dakota

**Conditions at proposal (October 26, 1989):** Ellsworth Air Force Base covers 4,858 acres in Meade and Pennington Counties, South Dakota, approximately 6 miles northeast of Rapid City and 1.4 miles north of Box Elder. The base is bordered by open land on three sides, and residential/commercial areas on the fourth.

Established in 1942, Ellsworth is now the base for the 44th Strategic Missile Wing of the Strategic Air Command (SAC). Base operations generally support the SAC mission and include runways, airfield operations, fire protection training, industrial and maintenance shops, a base hospital, grounds maintenance, a photo lab, and housing facilities. These operations generate a variety of chlorinated solvents, solvent-contaminated waste oils, pesticides, and other hazardous wastes that were deposited at various locations on the base.

Ellsworth Air Force Base is participating in the Installation Restoration Program (IRP), established in 1978. Under this program, the Department of Defense seeks to identify, investigate, and clean up contamination from hazardous materials. IRP has identified 17 potentially contaminated areas--13 on-base, 4 off-base. EPA evaluated four of these areas--three unlined landfills and the Fire Protection Training Area burn pit.

On-site shallow monitoring wells downgradient from the landfills and burn pit are contaminated with 1,1-dichloroethane, 1,2-dichloroethylene, trichloroethylene, arsenic, and chromium, according to tests conducted in 1987-88 by the Army Corps of Engineers. An estimated 1,600 people obtain drinking water from wells within 3 miles of the base, the nearest less than 1 mile downgradient of the burn pit and two of the landfills.

**Status (August 30, 1990):** Ellsworth has completed portions of a remedial investigation (RI) to determine the type and extent of contamination and is now working on a feasibility study (FS) to identify alternatives for remedial action. The FS focuses on 4 of the 17 areas originally identified. EPA is reviewing various documents from both the RI and FS.

EPA will shortly begin negotiations with Ellsworth for an Interagency Agreement under CERCLA Section 120 covering future activities at the base.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.