

ERB Acronym and Glossary – P

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
P	data qualifiers - method (analytical) qualifier - P	ICP.
P	data qualifiers - organic analysis - P	Used for a pesticide/aroclor target analyte when there is a greater than 25 percent difference for detected concentrations between the two GC columns.
P	Phosphorous	An essential chemical food element that can contribute to nutrient loading of lakes and other water bodies. Increased phosphorus levels result from discharge of phosphorus-containing materials into surface waters, like fertilizers.
P2	Pollution Prevention	The active process of identifying areas, processes, and activities which create excessive waste byproducts for the purpose of substitution, alteration, or elimination of the process to prevent waste generation.
PA	Performance Assessment	(1) An evaluation of the effectiveness of a remedial action; (2) monitoring for effective control of injected fluids; (3) monitoring for unintended mobilization of contaminants beyond the target treatment zone.
PA	Pollution Abatement	Pollution Abatement is to take action to control activities on the premises in order to stop or prevent pollution and unreasonable noise from occurring as prescribed under regulatory law.
PA	Preliminary Assessment	Identifies potential areas of contamination for further investigation. Consists of a review of available historical information (also known as a records search), aerial photographs, employee interviews, and site visits to gain information concerning installation activities and land use.
PAC	Powdered Activated Carbon	Activated Carbon (Powered form) filtration is recognized as an acceptable method to maintain drinking water contaminants within the limits of EPA Drinking Water Standards.
PACDIV	EFD Pacific Division	Naval Facilities Engineering Command Pacific Division (NAVFAC EFD Pacific) is one of four Engineering Field Divisions of the Naval Facilities Engineering Command. Serve as the Navy's facilities and installations engineering experts throughout the Pacific area; serving the Navy and Marine Corps Team, Unified Commands, DoD and other Federal Agencies.
PAH	Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbon	Hydrocarbons with multiple benzene rings. PAHs are typical components of asphalt, fuel, oils, and greases. Examples of PAHs include naphthalene, the benzo pyrenes, fluoranthene, and chrysene. Synonym - Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbon.
PAO	Public Affairs Officer	Public Affairs Officer (PAO) is appointed by the Organizational Head be the focal point for providing information, news and response to questions concerning organizational issues, operations and services.
PAS	photoacoustic spectroscopy	A spectroscopic technique based on the photoacoustic effect, which is the generation of heat after absorption of radiation (e.g., infrared light) due to radiationless deactivation or chemical reaction.
Pb	Lead	A ductile, heavy metal. It occurs naturally as a trace

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
		<p>constituent in rocks, soils, water, plants, animals and air. It is used widely in industry because of its softness, resistance to corrosion and radiation, and high density. It is used in storage batteries, gasoline additives, pigments, alloys, ammunition, and solder. Its use has been sharply restricted or eliminated by federal laws and regulations. Most lead entering natural waters will precipitate to the sediment bottom as carbonate or hydroxide compounds. However, at low pH and low organic conditions, it is in its most soluble, bioavailable and mobile form. Sorption is the dominant influence in soil. Mobility of lead in soil is low and therefore leaching to groundwater or runoff is not a predominant factor. Lead is not readily taken up by plants and does not appear to significantly bioaccumulate in most fish. Inhalation or ingestion of lead can cause neurological, cardiac and gastrointestinal problems. It is a Group B2, possible human carcinogen.</p>
PBC	performance based contracting	Structuring all aspects of an acquisition around the purpose of the work to be performed. PBC actions (task order) describe ¿what¿ is required (expected outcome) and places the responsibility on the contractor for determining ¿how¿ to deliver or meet the desired outcome on the contractor.
PC	Permeability Constant, cm/hr	Permeability Constant is defined as the steady-state rate of absorption .. skin (amount/cm ³), which is then expressed in cm/hr.
PCB	Polychlorinated Biphenyl	Chemical mixtures comprised of many isomers and compounds which vary from mobile, oily liquids to white, crystalline solids and hard, noncrystalline resins. PCBs have excellent fire retardant capabilities and chemical stability resulting in wide-spread use in electrical equipment. PCBs were used in the dielectric fluid of electrical transformers and capacitors for insulating purposes and in gas pipeline systems as lubricant. PCBs, however, are persistent and especially toxic when involved in fire-related incidents. Further sale for new use was banned by law in 1979. PCBs cause lesions of the skin and liver. Extensive damage to the liver from exposure can lead to death. The higher the chlorine content of the compound, the more toxic the effects. PCBs are Group B2, animal carcinogens. Common types of PCBs are Aroclor 1248, 1254, and 1260.
PCDD	Polychlorinated Dibenzo-p-dioxin	A member of the Dioxin family of chemicals that accumulate in the body fat of animals and humans and are resistant to the body's metabolism.
PCDF	Polychlorinated Dibenzofuran	A member of the Dioxin family of chemicals that accumulate in the body fat of animals and humans and are resistant to the body's metabolism.
PCE	Perchloroethylene	A volatile, clear, colorless liquid with an ethereal odor. Its former uses included dry cleaning, degreasing metals, and as a solvent. Contact can cause dermatitis and irritation, ingestion can cause gastrointestinal irritation. Exposures can result in acute or fatal toxicity. Synonyms - Tetrachloroethene, and

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
		Tetrachloroethylene.
PCE	Perchloroethylene - also tetrachloroethene	Perchloroethylene (PCE - tetrachloroethylene) is used as a solvent (cleaning). NIOSH recommends the solvent be handled as a potential carcinogen and states that workplace air levels should be as low as possible.
PCE	Tetrachloroethene	A volatile, clear, colorless liquid with an ethereal odor. Its former uses included dry cleaning, degreasing metals, and solvents. Contact can cause dermatitis and irritation, ingestion can cause gastrointestinal irritation. Exposures can result in acute or fatal toxicity. Synonym - Perchloroethylene and Tetrachloroethylene.
PCP	Pentachlorophenol	Dark-colored flakes and needle-like crystals which have a pungent odor when hot. It is used in wood preservatives, wood products, starches, dextrans, glue and algae control in herbicide formulation. PCP causes a variety of systemic problems that can lead to death. It is a Group B2, probable human carcinogen.
PCR	Pollution Control Report	Was the Navy's program to track environmental costs in accordance with Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-106.
PDSB	passive diffusion sampling bag	A low-density polyethylene lay-flat tube that is filled with distilled, deionized water and lowered into a borehole, where contaminants diffuse into the sampler.
PE Sample	Performance Evaluation Sample	Contains unknown quantities of analytes sent to a laboratory for analysis as part of the lab evaluation.
PEF	Particulate Emission Factor	Particulate Emission Factor is a calculation to represent human expose concentration number using an average emission from contaminated soil factoring in environmental conditions such as wind velocity and frequency.
PEG	Polyethylene Glycol	Polyethylene Glycol (an alcohol) can be attached to other molecules by a process called pegylation. When pegylated to medical drugs, it can alter their distribution in the body, metabolism, and excretion.
PEL	Permissible Exposure Limit	The maximum permissible concentration of a toxic chemical or exposure level of a harmful physical agent (normally averaged over an 8-hour period) to which a person may be exposed.
PELAN	Pulsed ELEMENTAL Analysis with Neutrons	PELAN is a man-portable system for the detection of explosives and chemical warfare agents. It is based on the principle that explosives and other contraband contain various chemical elements such as hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen in quantities that differentiate them. Separate gamma-ray spectra from fast neutron, thermal neutron, and activation reactions are accumulated and analyzed to determine elemental content.
Perchlorate	Perchlorate	Perchlorate is an inorganic chemical compound consisting of chlorine bonded to four oxygen atoms (ClO ₄ ⁻). Perchlorate is usually found as the anion component of a salt most often associated with one of the following common cations: ammonium (NH ₄ ⁺), sodium (Na ⁺), or potassium (K ⁺). The resulting salts are ammonium perchlorate (NH ₄ ClO ₄), potassium

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
		perchlorate (KClO ₄) and sodium perchlorate (NaClO ₄).
PFLA	phospholipid fatty acid profile	A microbiological test that determines viable biomass, community structure, and metabolic activity.
PFP	pay for performance	Performance-based contracting method endorsed by EPA and used by States in dry cleaner and petroleum cleanup programs. In PFP cleanups, contractors are paid a set amount of money for reaching specific contamination reduction goals within a set time limit.
PGRS	Plume Groundwater Recovery System	Plume Ground Water Recovery System (PGRS) collects the contaminated portion of the groundwater that moves past a source of pollution.
pH	Indicates the hydrogen ion concentration - acidity or basicity	the logarithm of the reciprocal of hydrogen-ion concentration in gram atoms per liter; provides a measure on a scale from 0 to 14 of the acidity or alkalinity of a solution (where 7 is neutral and 7 is basic).
PHA	Public Health Assessment	A Public Health Assessment is a document that examines hazardous substances, health outcomes, and community concerns at a HW site to determine whether people could be harmed.
PHI	Preliminary Hydrogeological Investigation	Investigation to demonstrate whether the presence of site conditions exist which are sufficient to support the development of an on-site water supply system.
PIC	Products of Incomplete Combustion	Products of Incomplete Combustion (PIC) can emit organic pollutants, metals, and fine particles which represent a global human and environmental health challenges.
PID	Photoionization Detector	Photoionization Detector (PID) use ultraviolet light detectors to measure organic vapor concentrations in air drawn through the sensing equipment.
PITT	partitioning interwell tracer test	A tracer test used for the detection and quantification of NAPL in the subsurface (in the vadose or saturated zones). PITTs are conducted by injection of a suite of tracers (includes both partitioning and nonpartitioning tracers) into one or more injection wells, and the simultaneous extraction of fluids from one or more extraction wells.
PLC	Programmable Logic Controller	A microprocessor based control system used to monitor and control either an entire process or a particular unit operation of a process by monitoring process parameters and using programmed logic to adjust process operations accordingly.
PM	Project Manager	Project Manager (PM) is a person whose responsibility is to plan, organize, and utilize and control resources to accomplish an objective within acceptable time, budget, and quality constraints.
PNA	Polynuclear Aromatic Hydrocarbon	Hydrocarbons with multiple benzene rings. PNAs are typical components of asphalt, fuel, oils, and greases. Examples of PNAs include naphthalene, the benzo pyrenes, fluoranthene, and chrysene. Synonym - Polycyclic Aromatic Hydrocarbons.
PNRS	Preliminary Natural Resource Survey	A simple screening study of a site by a trustee to determine whether trustee resources may have been affected and whether further attention is warranted.
Po	Polonium	A radioactive element that occurs in pitchblende and

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
		other uranium containing ores.
POA&M	Plan of Action and Milestones	A projected action that marks viable progress toward completing the objectives listed in the plan.
POC	Point of Contact	Point of Contact is an individual or organization which is knowledgeable of the action, issue, or question posed.
pOH	Indicates the hydroxide ion (OH-) concentration - basicity or acidity	the anion OH having one oxygen and one hydrogen atom.
POL	Petroleum, Oil and Lubricant	For example jet fuel, gasoline, diesel fuel and POL sludges.
POTW	Publicly Owned Treatment Works	A waste-treatment works owned by a state, unit of local government, or Indian tribe, usually designed to treat domestic wastewaters.
ppb	parts per billion	A drop of water in a 10,000 gallon gasoline tanker truck (this would be the largest gasoline tanker truck) would represent 1 part per billion of water in gasoline by volume.
PPC	Personal Protective Clothing	Site personnel wear personal protective clothing (PPC) to prevent risks to personnel from vapors, gases, and particulates from hazardous waste site activities.
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment	Any material or device worn to protect a worker from exposure to or contact with any harmful substance or force. For IR Program work, it includes protective clothing, respiratory devices, and protective shields and barriers.
PPL	Priority Pollutants List	Under the Clean Water Act, Priority Pollutants (PPL) refer to a list of 126 specific pollutants that includes heavy metals and specific organic chemicals.
ppm(v)	parts per million by volume	The greater part of air is composed of 78% nitrogen and 21% oxygen by volume. Argon, a daughter product of radioactive decay is 9,300 parts per million by volume. Carbon dioxide is approximately 375 parts per million by volume.
ppt	parts per thousand	Not to be confused with parts per trillion. There are just a few modern analytical techniques that can detect some substances to the level of parts per trillion.
PQL	Practical Quantitation Limit	The minimum concentration of an analyte required to be measured and allowed to be reported without qualification as an estimated quantity for samples without substantial interferences (for technical representation see SW-846).
PR	Preliminary Review	Preliminary Review (PR) is an examination of existing information about the facility and is the first step to focus the succeeding phases of the RCRA corrective action process.
PRAP	Proposed Remedial Action Plan	A Proposed Remedial Action Plan (PRAP) is a listing of proposed alternatives to remedy or mitigate risks identified for purposes of cleaning up a contaminated site.
PRB	Permeable Reactive Barrier	An emplacement of reactive materials where a contaminant plume must move through it as it flows, and treated water exists the other side.
PRG	Preliminary Remediation Goal	Concentration levels set for individual chemicals that, for

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
		carcinogens corresponds to a specific cancer risk level of 1 in 1 million and for noncarcinogens corresponds to a Hazard Quotient of 1. PRGs are generally selected when ARARs are not available.
PRP	Potentially Responsible Party	Any individual or company, including owners, operators, transporters or generators, potentially responsible for, or contributing to a spill or other contamination at a Superfund site. Whenever possible, through administrative and legal actions, GPA requires PRPs to clean up hazardous sites they have contaminated.
PRP Site	Potentially Responsible Party Site	Sites where the DOD has no current or past ownership interest and where DOD has a responsibility for cleanup of the site under CERCLA.
PRT	Portable Rapid Test	leak detection system
PSC	Potential Source of Contamination	Potential Sources of Contamination (PSC) for water sources listed by the EPA are; microbial, inorganic, pesticides and herbicides, organic chemicals and radioactive contaminants.
PSE	Preliminary Source Evaluation	Preliminary Source Evaluation (PSE) estimates the quantities of pollutant emissions directly emitted to the environment (air, land or water) and the relationship between these direct emissions and quality of life issues.
psi	pounds per square inch	Unit of measurement used for pressure, force per unit area. One psi would equal 6,895 pascals or newtons per square meter.
PSI	Preliminary Site Inspection	Preliminary Site Inspection (PSI) identify sites that enter the NPL Site Listing Process and provides the data needed for Hazard Ranking System scoring and documentation.
Pu	Plutonium	A radioactive metallic element chemically similar to uranium.
PVC	Polyvinyl Chloride	A tough, environmentally indestructible plastic that releases hydrochloric acid when burned.
PWC	Public Works Center	Public Works Centers (PWC) provide engineering, maintenance, utilities, transportation and environmental services and products to Navy ashore facilities to Naval Regions.
PWD	Public Works Department	Navy Public Works Departments (PWD) provide engineering, maintenance, utilities, transportation and environmental services and products to a specific Navy ashore facility.

ERB Glossary – P

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
	packaging	The assembly of one or more containers and any other components necessary to assure minimum compliance with a program's storage and shipment packaging requirements. Also, the containers, etc., involved.
	packed tower	A pollution control device that forces dirty air through a tower packed with crushed rock or wood chips while

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
		liquid is sprayed over the packing material. The pollutants in the air stream either dissolve or chemically react with the liquid.
	palatable water	Water at a desirable temperature that is free from objectionable tastes, odors, colors, and turbidity.
	parameter	A variable, measurable property whose value is a determinant of the characteristics of a system; e.g., temperature, pressure, and density are parameters of the atmosphere.
	parent PAH	Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons with no carbon-containing side-chains.
	partially penetrating well	A well in which the screened length is less than the saturated thickness of the aquifer.
	particle tracking	Method of visualizing streamlines or pathlines in a fluid flow system by displaying the trace of one or more neutrally buoyant particles (microscopic packets of fluid) as they are transported through the flow system.
	particulates	1) Fine liquid or solid particles such as dust, smoke, mist, fumes, or smog found in air or emissions. 2) Very small solids suspended in water. They vary in size, shape, density, and electrical charge, and can be gathered together by coagulation and flocculation.
	partition coefficient	Measure of the sorption phenomenon, whereby a chemical is divided between the soil and water phase; also referred to as adsorption partition coefficient.
	partitioning	Describes the differential concentration of a chemical within two adjacent fluid phases, and is expressed as the ration of the concentration between the two phases (i.e., the concentration ratio of a chemical in contact with NAPL:water or in vapor:water).
	Passive Diffusion Bag Sampler	Passive diffusion bag (PDB) samplers are a simple and inexpensive way to sample groundwater monitoring wells for a variety of volatile organic compounds (VOCs). A typical PDB sampler consists of low-density polyethylene lay-flat tubing filled with distilled, deionized water and heat-sealed at both ends. The bags are suspended by a weighted line at the target horizon in monitoring wells and allowed to equilibrate with the surrounding water. Retrieved after the equilibration period (typically two weeks), the enclosed water is immediately transferred to appropriate sample containers for analysis. Another type of PDB has recently been developed to allow the diffusion of both dissolved inorganic and organic contaminants from groundwater. These new Dialysis Membrane Diffusion Bags are made of cellulose and are used similarly to the polyethylene bags.
	passive remediation system	A system that removes or transforms contamination over a long period of time without requiring additional energy or chemical input and requiring very little operation and maintenance after initial installation.
	pathogenic	Capable of causing disease.
	pathogens	Microorganisms that can cause disease in other organisms or in humans, animals and plants (e.g.,

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
		bacteria, viruses, or parasites) found in sewage, in runoff from farms or rural areas populated with domestic and wild animals, and in water used for swimming. Fish and shellfish contaminated by pathogens, or the contaminated water itself, can cause serious illness.
	pathway	An exposure pathway refers to the way in which a person or ecological receptor may come into contact with a hazardous substance, whether it is chemical, biological, or some other harmful substance.
	Patuxent River	Patuxent River Naval Air Station is located in Southern Maryland
	percent saturation	The amount of a substance that is dissolved in a solution compared to the amount that could be dissolved in it.
	percent solids	The proportion of solid in a soil sample determined by drying an aliquot of the sample.
	perched aquifer	1) Unconfined groundwater separated from an underlying main body of groundwater by a localized unsaturated zone. 2) Zone of unpressurized water held above the water table by a small lens of impermeable rock or sediment.
	percolating water	Water that passes through rocks or soil under the force of gravity.
	percolation	1) Movement under hydrostatic pressure of water, through the interstices of rocks or soils, downward to groundwater, except movement through large openings such as solution channels. 2) Slow seepage of water through a filter.
	performance objectives	Criteria that measure the operational efficiency and suitability of a particular remedial technology. Performance objectives are distinct from remedial action objectives or cleanup goals because they take into account typical engineering performance and technology limitations.
	performance standards	1) Regulatory requirements limiting the concentrations of designated organic compounds, particulate matter, and hydrogen chloride in emissions from incinerators. 2) Operating standards established by EPA for various permitted pollution control systems, asbestos inspections, and various program operations and maintenance requirements.
	permanganate (MnO ₄)	Chemical that oxidizes organic matter, usually used as a salt or in crystalline form such as potassium permanganate.
	permeability	1) The property or capacity of a porous rock, sediment or soil to transmit a fluid per unit cross section without damage to the structure of the media. 2) A measure of the ease of fluid flow under unequal pressure. 3) A measure of how interconnected the pores of a material are.
	permissible dose	The dose of a chemical that may be received by an individual without the expectation of a significantly harmful result.
	permit	An authorization, license, or equivalent control

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
		document issued by EPA or an approved state agency to implement the requirements of an environmental regulation; e.g., a permit to operate a wastewater treatment plant or to operate a facility that may generate harmful emissions.
	persistence	Refers to the length of time a compound stays in the environment, once introduced. A compound may persist for less than a second or indefinitely.
	pesticide	Substances or mixtures intended for preventing, destroying, repelling, or mitigating any pest. Also, any substance or mixture intended for use as a plant regulator, defoliant, or desiccant.
	petrogenic	Term applied to chemicals (commonly PAH) formed from organic matter in ancient sediments/rocks by geologic conditions (temperature and pressure) over geologic time.
	petroleum	Including crude oil or any fraction thereof that is liquid at standard conditions of temperature and pressure (60° F and 14.7 lb/in ² absolute; 15.5C° and 10335.6 kg/m ²). The term includes petroleum-based substances comprised of a complex blend of hydrocarbons derived from crude oil through processes of separation, conversion, upgrading, and finishing, such as motor fuels, jet oils, lubricants, petroleum solvents, and used oils.
	petroleum derivatives	Chemicals formed when petroleum products break down in contact with groundwater.
	petroleum hydrocarbons	gasoline, diesel, motor oils, and similar materials
	PH	The negative value of the power to which 10 is raised in order to obtain the concentration of hydrogen ions (H ₃ O ⁺) in gram-equivalents per liter. pH is a measure of the acidity or basicity of a material: measured 0 through 14 with 7 being neutral, 0 being highly acidic and 14 being highly basic. Natural waters usually have a pH between 6.5 and 8.5.
	phase	A physically distinct and separable form of matter that may be a single compound. For example, water is stable in three phases: solid (ice), liquid, and vapor. Treatment systems often use phase differences to separate contaminants from water.
	Phenolphthalein Alkalinity	The alkalinity in a water sample measured by the amount of standard acid needed to lower the pH to a level of 8.3 as indicated by the change of color of the phenolphthalein from pink to clear.
	Phenols	Organic compounds that are byproducts of petroleum refining, tanning, and textile, dye, and resin manufacturing. Low concentrations cause taste and odor problems in water; higher concentrations can kill aquatic life and humans.
	Phosphates	Certain chemical compounds containing phosphorus.
	photosynthesis	The manufacture by plants of carbohydrates and oxygen from carbon dioxide mediated by chlorophyll in the presence of sunlight.

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
	physical and chemical treatment	Processes generally used in large-scale wastewater treatment facilities. Physical processes may include air-stripping or filtration. Chemical processes include coagulation, chlorination, or ozonation. The term can also refer to treatment of toxic materials in surface and groundwaters, oil spills, and some methods of dealing with hazardous materials on or in the ground.
	phytoplankton	That portion of the plankton community comprised of tiny plants, e.g., algae, diatoms.
	phytoremediation	A remediation technology using plants to degrade contaminants in soil, sediment and groundwater.
	phytotoxic	Harmful to plants.
	picoplankton	Plankton in the size range of 0.2 to 2.0 μ m.
	piezometer	A well with a screen length that is only 1-5% of an aquifer's saturated thickness. Generally used to measure the total potential or head at a point in an aquifer.
	piezometric surface	An imaginary surface that everywhere coincides with the static water level in a confined aquifer.
	pilot tests	Testing a cleanup technology under actual site conditions to identify potential problems prior to full-scale implementation. Innovative research in which a new treatment or remediation technology is extensively evaluated for a small contaminated site or a portion of a site before larger-scale, or full-scale, applications. Usually designed and performed to obtain performance data required for full scale implementation.
	pipe schedule	Standard method for designating the wall thickness of pipe.
	plankton	Tiny plants and animals that live in water.
	plasma-arc reactor	An incinerator that operates at extremely high temperatures and treats highly toxic wastes that do not burn easily.
	plastics	Non-metallic chemoreactive compounds molded into rigid or pliable construction materials, fabrics, etc.
	plugging	Act or process of stopping the flow of water, oil, or gas into or out of a formation through a borehole or well penetrating that formation.
	plume	1) A visible or measurable discharge of a contaminant from a given point of origin. Can be visible or thermal in water as it extends downstream from the pollution source, or visible in air as, for example, a plume of smoke. 2) The area of radiation leaking from a damaged reactor. 3) Area downwind within which a release could be dangerous for those exposed to leaking fumes.
	pneumatic	Operated by or involving the pressure of air or some other gas.
	POH	The negative value of the power to which 10 is raised in order to obtain the concentration of hydroxide ions (OH ⁻) in gram-equivalents per liter. Effectively, pOH is the opposite of pH: 7 is neutral, 0 is highly basic and 14 is highly acidic.

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
	point source	1) A stationary location or fixed facility from which pollutants are discharged. 2) Any single identifiable source of pollution, e.g., a pipe, ditch, ship, ore pit, factory smokestack, etc.
	point(s) of compliance	A location(s) selected between the source area(s) and the potential point(s) of exposure where concentrations of chemicals of concern must be at or below the determined target levels in media (for example, groundwater, soil, or air).
	point(s) of exposure	The point(s) at which an individual or population may come in contact with a chemical(s) of concern originating from a site.
	polar	Describing a substance or molecule in which the positive and negative electrical charges are permanently separated, as opposed to nonpolar molecules in which the charges coincide. Polar molecules ionize in solution and impart electrical conductivity. Water, alcohol, and sulfuric acid are polar. Most hydrocarbon liquids are nonpolar. Carboxyl and hydroxyl groups often exhibit an electric charge. The formation of emulsions and the action of detergents are dependent on this behavior.
	pollen	1) The fertilizing element of flowering plants. 2) Background air pollutant.
	pollutant	1) As defined by section 101(33) of CERCLA, shall include but not be limited to, any element, substance, compound or mixture, including disease-causing agents, which after release into the environment and upon exposure, ingestion, inhalation, or assimilation into any organism, either directly from the environment or indirectly by ingestion through food chains, will or may reasonably be anticipated to cause death, disease, behavioral abnormalities, cancer, genetic mutation, physiological malfunctions (including malfunctions in reproduction) or physical deformations, in such organisms or their offspring. Shall not include petroleum, including crude oil or any fraction thereof which is not otherwise specifically listed or designated as a hazardous substance and shall not include natural gas, liquified natural gas or synthetic gas of pipeline quality (or mixtures of natural gas and such synthetic gas). 2) For purposes of the NCP, the term pollutant or contaminant means any pollutant or contaminant that may present an imminent and substantial danger to public health or welfare. 3) Generally, any substance introduced into the environment that adversely affects the usefulness of a resource.
	pollution	Generally, the presence of matter or energy whose nature, location, or quantity produces undesired environmental effects. Under the Clean Water Act, for example, the term is defined as the manmade or man-induced alteration of the physical, biological, chemical, and radiological integrity of water.
	polychaete	A marine worm with paired, flattened, bristle-tipped organs of locomotion.

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
	polymer	Basic molecular ingredients in plastic.
	population	1) A group of interbreeding organisms occupying a particular space. 2) The number of humans or other living creatures in a designated area.
	population at risk	A population subgroup that is more likely to be exposed to a chemical, or is more sensitive to the chemical, than is the general population.
	pore space	The void space and minute passages in a solid material.
	post-closure	The time period following the shutdown of a waste management or manufacturing facility; for monitoring purposes, often considered to be 30 years.
	potable water	Water that is safe for drinking and cooking.
	potential receptor	Any living organism or environmental medium which is in the pathway of contamination from a discharge.
	potentiation	The effect of one chemical to increase the effect of another chemical.
	potentiometric surface	1) An imaginary surface that everywhere coincides with the static water level in a confined aquifer. 2) The level to which water will rise in cased wells or other cased excavations into confined aquifers.
	precipitate	A solid that separates from a solution.
	precipitation	1) The formation of solids out of constituents that were once dissolved. Precipitation is caused by a change in conditions, such as temperature, chemical concentration, or the presence of seed particles to begin the process. 2) Water droplets or ice particles, as rain or snow, condensed from atmospheric water vapor and massive enough to fall to the earth's surface. 3) Removal of hazardous solids from liquid waste to permit safe disposal. 4) Removal of particles from airborne emissions.
	precision	A measure of mutual agreement among individual measurements of the same property, usually under prescribed similar conditions. Precision is usually expressed in terms of standard deviation.
	pretreatment	Processes used to reduce, eliminate, or alter the nature of wastewater pollutants from non-domestic sources before they are discharged into publicly owned treatment works (POTWs).
	prevention	Measures taken to minimize the release of wastes to the environment.
	primary drinking water regulation	Applies to public water systems and specifies a contaminant level, which, in the judgment of the EPA Administrator, will not adversely affect human health.
	primary substrate	Substrate which provides the majority of the growth and energy requirements for cells.
	principal components analysis	A classic exploratory, multivariate data analysis tool that maximizes variability in the data; appropriate for comparing the chemical distributions in environmental samples.
	priority pollutant	A group of approximately 130 chemicals (about 110 are

Acronym	Glossary	Definition
		organics) that appear on a USEPA list because they are toxic and relatively common in industrial discharges.
	probability of detection	The likelihood, expressed as a percentage, that a test method will correctly identify a leaking tank.
	production well	A well of sufficient production so it can be used for public use, either as a water supply, or for industrial purposes.
	proposed plan	A plan for a site cleanup that is available to the public for comment.
	proteins	Complex nitrogenous organic compounds of high molecular weight made of amino acids; essential for growth and repair of animal tissue. Many, but not all, proteins are enzymes.
	protocol	A series of formal steps for conducting a test.
	protozoa	One-celled animals that are larger and more complex than bacteria. May cause disease.
	public	As defined by the NCP includes citizens directly affected by a site, other interested citizens or parties, organized groups, elected officials, and potentially responsible parties.
	public hearing	A formal meeting wherein officials hear the public's views and concerns about an action or proposal. The Navy is required to consider such comments when evaluating its actions. Public hearings must be held upon request during the public comment period.
	public notice	1) Notification by EPA informing the public of Agency actions such as the issuance of a draft permit or scheduling of a hearing. EPA is required to ensure proper public notice, including publication in newspapers and broadcast over radio stations. 2) In the safe drinking water program, water suppliers are required to publish and broadcast notices when pollution problems are discovered.
	public water supply	In Virginia, as defined by the Virginia Department of Health, a water system serving at least 25 individuals or more than 15 residential connections.
	Pug Mill	A hand-driven machine which further crushes and blends powder clay.
	pump and treat	Treatment method in which contaminated water is pumped out of the ground and then treated before being discharged.
	pumping level	Depth to water in a well when the well is being pumped.
	pumping test	Pumping of a well at a constant rate in order to obtain information about the performance of the well or to provide data from which the principal factors of aquifer performance can be calculated. A test for the latter purpose is also called an aquifer test.
	pyrogenic	Term applied to chemicals (commonly PAH) formed during combustion or pyrolysis of organic matter (wood, coal, petroleum, wastes).
	pyrolysis	Decomposition of a chemical by extreme heat.