



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Umatilla Chemical Depot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Army begins mustard blister agent disposal campaign Last Oregon chemical weapons stockpile campaign begins

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore. – Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD) storage workers began delivering HD mustard-filled bulk containers or “ton containers” to the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) at 10 a.m. this morning. This marks the official start of the last individual chemical munitions disposal campaign at the depot.

“Our experienced crews are dedicated to safe and secure munitions movement and delivery to the disposal plant,” said Lt. Col. Bob Stein, depot commander. “Deliveries have gone very well during the 12 previous munitions campaigns, but risk remains until the last ton container is gone.”

The HD mustard disposal campaign is expected to take between one and two years to complete.

“We begin this final campaign with the same dedication to safe disposal of chemical munitions that we’ve had since the first disposal campaign that began in 2004,” said Mike Strong, the Army’s site project manager at UMCDF. “Safety of workers, community and environment has always been and remains our highest priority.”

“As always, we’ll focus on environmental compliance and safety during the mustard campaign,” said Bob Dikeman, project general manager for Washington Defense Group of URS Corporation’s EG&G Division. Washington Defense Group built and operates the disposal plant for the Army. “We expect to continue to meet the high standards of state oversight officials.”

A safe, slow and deliberate startup of mustard agent processing is planned, similar to past campaigns. The mustard ton containers hold bulk agent only and don’t have any explosive components. Destruction of the last munitions in the Umatilla stockpile that contained explosives—VX nerve agent land mines—was completed on Nov. 5, 2008.

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Disposal of HD mustard containers is the 13th individual chemical munitions disposal campaign for the depot and disposal plant. Previously, the Army successfully destroyed six different types of GB or sarin-filled munitions plus six types of VX-filled munitions. Most of those munitions contained explosive components. A total of 217,969 GB and VX munitions have been safely destroyed to date. The US and other nations are destroying chemical weapons stockpiles in compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) international treaty.

The first chemical munitions disposal campaign in Oregon began on Sept. 7, 2004, with the first movement of GB-filled M55 rockets to the disposal plant. Since that time, the following 12 chemical munitions disposal campaigns have been safely completed:

- 4 GB (sarin-filled) bulk containers or “ton containers” completed Jan. 5, 2006. This was a Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel Project (NSCMP) mission.
- 27 GB 500-pound bombs completed May 18, 2006.
- 2,418 GB 750-pound bombs completed June 9, 2006.
- 91,442 GB rockets and warheads completed Aug. 9, 2006.
- 14,246 GB 8-inch diameter artillery projectiles completed Jan. 3, 2007.
- 47,406 GB 155mm diameter artillery projectiles completed July 8, 2007.
- One VX bulk container or “ton container” completed Nov. 26, 2007. This was a Non-Stockpile Chemical Materiel Project (NSCMP) mission.
- 156 VX aircraft-mounted spray tanks completed Dec. 24, 2007.
- 14,519 VX rockets and warheads completed Jan. 23, 2008.
- 32,313 VX 155mm projectiles completed June 27, 2008.
- 3,752 VX 8-inch projectiles completed August 6, 2008.
- 11,685 VX land mines completed Nov. 5, 2008.

Some of the disposal campaigns ran simultaneously. The disposal plant has multiple processing lines and is capable of safely disposing of different types of munitions at the same time.

When the Umatilla chemical munitions destruction mission is complete, toxic areas in the disposal plant will be thoroughly cleaned and disassembled according to environmental permits. The Umatilla Chemical Depot is slated for closure per the 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) law. Chemical munitions have been safely and securely stored at the depot since the 1960s. The depot first opened in 1941.

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