



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Umatilla Chemical Depot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Depot Detects Trace Amount of Agent Vapor

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore. – A depot chemical operations crew detected a trace amount of GB Sarin chemical agent vapor Sunday inside a depot storage structure storing over packed weapons and ton containers.

The crew was conducting routine daily monitoring operations with standard mobile air-monitoring equipment. Most weapons in the storage structure, also called an “igloo,” have previously leaked and are over packed in larger containers for additional safety and protection. The structure has a “passive” filter system, which prevents chemical agent vapor from escaping to the outside atmosphere. However, as a further protective measure, a powered filter system was installed Sunday.

A depot crew is expected to enter the structure today to locate the source of the trace amount of vapor readings.

Many weapons in the igloo have been there since 1984. It is, therefore, not uncommon for the depot’s mobile air-monitoring equipment to get very low-level vapor readings. Even though the readings are so low they are not harmful to the public or the environment, depot officials notify the public when such incidents occur.

Also, emergency operations centers in Umatilla and Morrow counties, Ore., Benton County, Wash., the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality have been notified.

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