



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL  
MATERIALS AGENCY

# PRESS RELEASE

## Umatilla Chemical Depot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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For More Information Contact:  
Mary Binder  
(541) 564-5312 / 379-8810  
Rick Kelley  
(541) 564-7304/571-1779

### **Rocket Processing Resumes at the UMCDF**

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT (UMCD), HERMISTON, Ore. – Destruction of chemical agent weapons stored at the UMCD resumed today.

Following a 22-day safety stand down, the processing of stored M55 rockets filled with GB (Sarin) nerve agent began at 1:31 p.m. The U.S. Army granted permission to resume operations after receiving assurances by Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) contractor, Washington Group International, that corrective actions resulting in the stand down have been implemented.

The stand down was initiated after two UMCDF workers unclamped an incorrect door inside one of the plant's filter units Dec. 1 causing the slow migration of low levels of chemical agent vapor into an adjacent room. The workers were not exposed to agent and no vapors were released to the atmosphere.

Washington Group initiated an immediate investigation of the incident and completed a root cause analysis that outlined causes of the incident and corrective actions. Washington Group, the systems contractor, completed corrective actions Dec. 21 and received concurrence from the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality and the Army to resume chemical agent weapons destruction.

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*The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency is responsible for safely storing and eliminating the United States' aging chemical weapons and agent stockpiles and for the safe elimination of recovered chemical materiel.*

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