



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL  
MATERIALS AGENCY

# PRESS RELEASE

## Umatilla Chemical Depot

**For Immediate Release**  
**Date: Dec. 7, 2005**  
**Time: 1:30 p.m.**

**For More Information Contact**  
**Mary Alice Binder, PAO**  
**Public Affairs Office**  
**541-564-5312/ 541-379-8810**

### Rocket Fire at the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility

**Umatilla Chemical Depot, Hermiston, Ore.** – Rocket processing at the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) stopped today following a rocket fire in one of the facility's two remotely operated Explosive Containment Rooms (ECRs).

The fire occurred in ECR-B at 7:17 a.m. during normal M55 rocket processing. The rocket's chemical agent had been drained and the rocket was at the shear machine when the incident occurred.

As with four previous ECR fires, this one occurred during the fifth of seven shears. The ECR is under engineering controls so the fire and chemical agent were contained within the room. There were no injuries.

"Our plant and personnel response to the event was consistent with our procedures," said Project General Manager Doug Hamrick. "Equipment operated normally, and there appears to be little, if any, damage."

Modifications made to the ECR's Fire Suppression System in May helped suppress the fire in about two minutes, thereby minimizing damage to the equipment. A recovery and repair plan was implemented and an initial assessment concluded that damage was minor, the equipment was operable so the remainder of the rocket at the shear station has been processed.

"This fire appears to be similar to the others we've experienced at Umatilla," said Army Site Project Manager Don Barclay. "Although all the research done to date has not specifically pinpointed a root cause, the Army Chemical Materials Agency continues to actively investigate the cause.

"For example, rocket propellant samples from Umatilla and the Pine Bluff, Ark., facility have been pulled and are being analyzed at an Army research facility at Picatinny Arsenal, N.J.," Barclay explained. "Results are projected for sometime in January. However, I am very pleased that we've been able to safely process close to 20,000 rockets since the last fire," Barclay said.

Rocket processing is projected to resume in ECR-A this afternoon. There is no projection yet on when processing will resume in ECR-B. More information will be released when it becomes available.

-- 30 --

*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.*

WWW.CMA.ARMY.MIL

C R E A T I N G   A   S A F E R   T O M O R R O W