



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Umatilla Chemical Depot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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CONTACT:

Bruce Henrickson, Public Affairs Office

(541) 564-5312

bruce.henrickson@umcd.army.mil

Hal McCune, WDC

(541) 564-7304

hal.mccune@wgint.com

Small rocket fire reported at Depot

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore. – A small rocket fire occurred at about 7:45 a.m. this morning during processing of GB (sarin) M55 rockets at the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF). The fire was contained in one of two Explosive Containment Rooms (ECRs) designed to contain such events. There was no danger to workers, surrounding communities or the environment.

The GB agent had been drained and the rocket was being sheared when the small fire occurred. The fire occurred during the fifth of seven shears, which cuts through the portion of the rocket containing the propellant. This was the 15th GB rocket fire, all of which have been completely contained.

The operation was under engineering controls and the fire was totally contained in ECR-A. The incident triggered the fire suppression system. An initial review showed little damage in ECR-A. A rocket fire recovery team met this morning to evaluate the situation and oversee repairs. Once those repairs are complete, processing could resume today in either ECR-A or ECR-B.

UMCDF had processed about 90 rockets this morning when the fire occurred. There are less than 4,400 rockets remaining to be processed.

Depot officials provided rocket-fire notification to the off-post emergency operations centers in Umatilla and Morrow counties in Oregon, Benton County, Wash., the states of Oregon and Washington, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, and the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality.

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The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) is a dedicated team whose expertise and oversight sets the standards of excellence and leadership in safely storing the nation's aging chemical weapons and developing programs aimed at effectively recovering, treating and ultimately eliminating the nation's chemical warfare materiel. CMA personnel also enhance national security by providing specialized products and capabilities to our nation's Warfighters, and homeland defense and response capabilities. CMA encourages public participation and is committed to worker and public safety, and environmental stewardship. For more information about CMA and its programs, visit www.cma.army.mil

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