



# PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

## Umatilla Chemical Depot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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TIME: 8:20 a.m.

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### Small rocket fire reported

**UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore.** – A small rocket fire occurred at about 5:30 a.m. this morning during the processing of GB (sarin) M55 rockets in one of two Explosive Containment Rooms (ECRs) at the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF). There was no danger to workers, surrounding communities or the environment.

The incident occurred after the GB agent had been drained and the rocket was routinely being sheared. As with most previous small rocket fires at the plant, the fire was sparked during the fifth of seven shears. It occurred in the portion of the rocket containing rocket propellant.

The operation was under engineering controls and the fire was totally contained in ECR-A. The flame was visible only for about one second before the fire was extinguished.

The rocket was from a batch that includes propellant manufactured in October 1962. Those rockets have proved more susceptible to rocket fires during processing than rockets from other lots. Operators had processed 131 rockets this morning without incident when the fire occurred on the 132<sup>nd</sup> rocket.

UMCDF processed 456 rockets Monday and surpassed 75,000 rockets destroyed this morning.

Workers are assessing any impact to ECR-A and will make any needed repairs before rocket processing resumes. Processing likely will resume today in either ECR-A or ECR-B.

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

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