



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL
MATERIALS AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

Umatilla Chemical Depot

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OSHA awards 'Star' status to Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility for safety and health commitment

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore. – The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has recognized the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) for its exemplary performance and commitment to safety and health. OSHA recently approved UMCDF's application for "Star" status in the OSHA Voluntary Protection Program (VPP).

The recognition for UMCDF comes after an OSHA review team unanimously recommended the facility for Star status, the highest achievement possible in the program, in June 2006. Approval of VPP status is OSHA's official recognition of the outstanding efforts of employers and employees who have achieved exemplary occupational safety and health. The weapons disposal facility is operated for the Army by Washington Group International (WGI).

"Our employees have demonstrated that safety is truly a core value," said Doug Hamrick, WGI project general manager at UMCDF. "This is a great accomplishment, and we will continue to enhance our safety performance until the project is complete."

UMCDF is only the second chemical weapons demilitarization site in the nation to be awarded VPP Star status. The Anniston Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (ANCDF) in Alabama earned the honor in 2006. Washington Group, through UMCDF, becomes just the 12th company in Oregon to earn VPP Star status. Washington Group International also was inducted into OSHA's VPP Corporate Pilot Program in 2006, the fifth organization to be selected.

VPP sets performance-based criteria for a managed safety and health system and then assesses applicants against those criteria. Approval of VPP status is OSHA's official recognition of an excellent safety record and culture.

"Our employees have taken full ownership of the program and implemented safe work practices into all tasks," UMCDF Safety Manager Randy Spaniel said. "Achieving this designation is an honor, and everyone at UMCDF should be very proud. But most importantly, it means this is a safe work site for employees and the community."

UMCDF completed 2006 with the lowest number of recordable injuries in a 12-month calendar year in the project's nearly 10-year history.

"Each employee's commitment to safety and health is reflected in our plant's significant accomplishments," said Don Barclay, the Army's site project manager. "I am incredibly proud of what we are doing to dispose of chemical weapons in such a safe manner."

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