



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Umatilla Chemical Depot

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UMCDF surpasses 6 million safe hours

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore. – The Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) has surpassed 6 million work hours without a lost-time accident. The Safety Department reported the milestone was reached Jan. 15, 1,288 days or nearly three and a half years since a UMCDF employee missed work because of an injury.

This is the first time UMCDF has reached 6 million safe hours, which is the equivalent of 100 employees working 30 years without a lost-time incident. UMCDF has about 830 workers.

“The safety of our employees always comes first,” said Bob Dikeman, project general manager for URS, the company that built and operates the UMCDF. “When our employees work safely, it means we are keeping the community and environment safe as well.”

The management at UMCDF points to the project’s employee-led teams that focus on safety and environmental compliance as a key to reaching this milestone. The project also has been designated a Volunteer Protection Program (VPP) Star site by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). VPP Star status represents the highest safety recognition issued by the federal government. It is OSHA’s official recognition of the outstanding efforts of employers and employees who have achieved exemplary occupational safety and health.

The project’s stretch without a lost-time accident is all the more remarkable considering the heavy industrial work that’s done at UMCDF, Dikeman noted. Normal work assignments include operating cranes and forklifts, welding and electrical work.

One measurement of the effectiveness of a company’s safety culture is its rolling (or annual) recordable injury rate (RIR). OSHA describes a recordable injury as one that requires medical attention, ranging from stitches to broken bones and other serious injuries. UMCDF finished 2009 with an RIR of .70 (0.70 recordable injuries for every 200,000 work hours). According to OSHA, that’s comparable to people who work on computer design or in credit card offices.

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