



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL
MATERIALS AGENCY

PRESS RELEASE

Umatilla Chemical Depot

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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 10:38 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 five 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. The event was more of a pressure pulse and less of a fire."

The ECR's Fire Suppression System functioned as designed, activating the water deluge system. A recovery and repair plan has been implemented and an initial damage assessment is underway.

"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."

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

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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.

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