

# Fact Sheet – Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility



State of Oregon  
Department of  
Environmental  
Quality

## Eastern Region Chemical Demilitarization Program

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## Modification of Hazardous Waste Permit

### Background

In February 1997, the Environmental Quality Commission, the DEQ's governing body, issued environmental permits to the U.S. Army to build and operate the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) to destroy the chemical weapons stockpile stored at the Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD) near Hermiston, Oregon.

Originally the Umatilla Chemical Depot stored nerve agents and blister (called "mustard") agents in liquid form. All of the chemical warfare agents are highly toxic. Before disposal operations began in September 2004, the original stockpile at the Umatilla depot consisted of nerve agents stored in munitions such as rockets, projectiles and land mines, and in large containers such as spray tanks, bombs and "ton containers." Mustard agent is stored only in ton containers. As disposal continues, the Umatilla depot is steadily eliminating various types of agents and munitions.

### Who requests changes to the Permit?

Any member of the public may request that the DEQ modify the permit. However, the "Permittee" usually makes a request for Permit Modification. In the case of UMCDF there are actually three "Co-Permittees": the Umatilla Chemical Depot (UMCD), the U.S. Army's and Washington Demilitarization Company (formerly Raytheon), the contractor that built and operates UMCDF.

### What are DEQ's responsibilities?

The DEQ is responsible for Oregon's air and water quality, and management of hazardous and solid waste to protect human health and the environment. The DEQ's "Chemical Demilitarization Program" is based in Hermiston

and provides daily environmental oversight of the Umatilla Chemical Depot and UMCDF.

Staff members include an Administrator, technical and hazardous waste specialists and office support staff. The DEQ Chemical Demilitarization Program mission statement is:

*"To protect people and the environment by overseeing the safe destruction of the chemical agents at the Umatilla Chemical Depot as soon as possible."*

### Why does the Army's Permit need to be modified?

The UMCDF hazardous waste storage and treatment permit is considered an operating document, and many modifications of the document are expected to occur over the duration of the project. Modifications are required if there are alterations to the originally permitted facility, new information becomes available to the Permittee or to DEQ, or there are new regulations that apply to the facility.

Permit modifications are divided into three classes, and each has a slightly different public involvement process, depending on the significance of the proposed modification.

DEQ may issue a "Notice of Deficiency" for any of the permit modification request classes, requiring the Permittee to provide additional information or clarification of the information submitted with the modification request.

### Class 1 modifications

Class 1 modifications involve minor changes to the permit. This type of modification does not substantially change the conditions in the permit or operation of the facility. Examples of Class 1 modifications include updates to addresses,

correction of typographical errors, changes to telephone numbers, or an upgrade of equipment.

The DEQ may reject a modification. However, if DEQ approves the modification the Permittee must send a notice to everyone on the DEQ's mailing list within 90 days. Any member of the public may request that the DEQ revisit a Class 1 modification request.

### **Class 2 modifications**

Class 2 modifications are significant changes to the permit and are used primarily to address improvements in technology and management of the facility. A Class 2 modification requires the Permittee to submit a request to the DEQ that includes a description of the proposed change, why it is needed, and supporting documentation.

The Permittee must publish a notice and hold an informational meeting during the 60-day public comment period. Comments on the proposed modification must be directed to DEQ as indicated in the public notice.

### **Class 3 modifications**

Class 3 modifications are used for major changes to the Facility or its operation. An example of a Class 3 modification would be an increase in the amount of hazardous waste stored or incinerated at a facility. Class 3 modifications require the Permittee to follow the same procedures as Class 2 modifications, including notifying the public, having a 60-day comment period, and holding an informational public meeting. But in the case of Class 3 modification requests there is an additional public comment period of 45 days. The 45 day period begins the day that DEQ issues a draft decision on the modification. DEQ usually conducts a public hearing during the 45-day comment period to accept oral testimony.

The DEQ provides a written response to significant comments (received during the comment periods) for both Class 2 and Class 3 modifications when a final decision on the modification request is issued. Some Class 3 modifications may be decided by the EQC.

### **Where to get more information**

Contact the DEQ office in Hermiston, 256 East Hurlburt (Suite 105) or call (541) 567-8297 (toll-free in Oregon 1-800-452-4011).

### **Alternative formats**

*Alternative formats of this document can be made available. Contact DEQ at (541) 567-8297. People with hearing impairment may call DEQ's TTY at 800-735-2900.*

