



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Umatilla Chemical Depot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug. 3, 2011

1:30 p.m.

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Rinsate system speeds up mustard campaign

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore. – Thanks to an innovative process not used anywhere else in the demilitarization world, the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) is expected to finish destroying the last of the mustard blister agent stored at the Umatilla Chemical Depot well ahead of the April 2012 international treaty deadline.

UMCDF uses two furnaces to destroy mustard agent, a Liquid Incinerator (LIC) and a Metal Parts Furnace (MPF). The Rinsate Collection System (RCS), which went into operation last April, has allowed the LIC to do more of the work, trimming weeks off the facility's production schedule in the process. That will potentially save the Army, and taxpayers, millions of dollars.

Here's how the process works: The liquid mustard agent is pumped from the metal ton containers (TCs) and fed to one of two LICs. However, most TCs have a "heel" of solid mustard material resulting from more than 40 years in storage. High pressure hot water is used to break up the heels, and the resulting mixture – rinsate – was initially pumped into one or more empty (or recipient) TCs. The state limits the amount of rinsate a TC can hold when it goes through the MPF to a little more than 400 pounds (about 40 gallons), which determines how many rinsate TCs are needed. The MPF burns up the contents of the TCs and decontaminates the container.

There were 2,635 mustard TCs stored at the depot, but processing all the rinsate through the MPF had the potential of as much as doubling that number. Since the MPF processes only an average of about six TCs a day, adding recipient TCs increases the time it will take to complete the campaign.

Enter the RCS. Rather than pump rinsate into recipient TCs and process in the MPF, the RCS enables the facility to pump rinsate to two holding tanks that agitate and filter the rinsate before pumping it directly to the LIC. That's a process that hasn't been used at any other demilitarization plant in the world, including similar incineration facilities operated by URS in Utah, Arkansas and Alabama.

(MORE)

The RCS required the addition of significant piping, holding tanks, self-cleaning filters and pumps. But it has had a big impact on the project's schedule. Through July 31, the RCS has pumped 165,288 pounds of rinsate to the LIC. It would have taken about 395 TCs to destroy the same amount of rinsate in the MPF, and taken more than two months.

When URS embarked on development of the RCS it was concerned about meeting the treaty commitment by the United States. Now it expects to finish in November, several months ahead of that deadline.

(See attached RCS fact sheet)

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