



PRESS RELEASE

U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Umatilla Chemical Depot

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UMCDF surpasses 5 million safe hours

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore. – The Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) surpassed 5 million hours without a lost-time accident on June 8. It has been 1,067 days or nearly three years since a UMCDF employee missed work because of an accident.

This is the first time UMCDF has reached 5 million safe hours, which is the equivalent of a single person working 2,500 years without a lost-time accident. UMCDF has about 830 workers.

“What’s most important about that number is it means people are not getting injured at work,” said Bob Dikeman, project general manager for the Washington Defense Group of URS, the company that built and operates the incineration plant. “And when our employees work safely, it means we are keeping the community and environment safe as well.”

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 has a RIR of .34, or 0.34 recordable injuries for every 200,000 work hours.

That’s a remarkable safety record, Dikeman said, especially considering the heavy industrial work that’s done at UMCDF. Workers regularly do jobs such as crane work, welding and electrical work.

The management at UMCDF points to the project’s employee-led teams, which focus on safety and environmental compliance, as the 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.

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