



Explo Systems, Inc., Site Removal Action

Camp Minden

Webster Parish, Louisiana

November 2014

This Fact Sheet will tell you about...

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Current Actions

On October 28, 2014, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) signed a Settlement Agreement for the destruction of more than 15 million pounds of military propellants at the Explo Systems, Inc., Camp Minden, Louisiana site. The Agreement is effective on November 4, 2014. This Agreement had previously been signed by the U.S. Army, Louisiana Military Department (LMD) of the Louisiana National Guard, and the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality (LDEQ). The Agreement establishes the roles and responsibilities of these parties:

- The LMD will perform the work;
- The United States, on behalf of the Army, will pay for the work performed;
- The EPA will oversee the work and coordinate its review of the work with LDEQ to ensure the environment is protected.

In addition, provisions of the Agreement that deal with the recovery of past costs by EPA will be published in the Federal Register for 30 days. After the comment period EPA will finalize the costs incurred provisions. This aspect of the Agreement does not delay the effective date.

The work to be performed by the LMD includes issuing and managing a contract for the onsite

controlled burning of more than 15 million pounds of military propellants.

EPA selected controlled open burning after evaluating a number of disposal alternatives. The Army Explosive Safety Board advised EPA that deterioration of the propellants could greatly increase the risk of explosion in as little as a year from now. EPA selected onsite controlled burning based on the need to safely dispose of the material as soon as possible. This approach can be conducted safely and is an established remedy for disposing of off specification explosives.

EPA, LDEQ, and LMD have and will be in constant coordination throughout the removal action. Air, water, and soil will be tested to minimize environmental impacts and ensure protection of human health.

Past Actions

General Dynamics and Alliant Techsystems (GD/ATK), and Hercules, Inc. signed Agreements with the EPA to remove and dispose of some 3 million pounds of assorted explosives material. GD/ATK began the removal of explosives from the site in April 2014 and will be complete next year. Hercules, Inc. is removing 661,000 pounds of nitrocellulose and will be completed by January 2015. The explosives are being packaged and loaded in accordance with U.S. Department of Transportation regulations.

Future Actions

EPA will initiate a series of community meetings to explain progress and solicit input on how best to communicate progress. EPA will also work with the parties of the Agreements to ensure the disposal of all explosive material is conducted as efficiently as possible without compromising the safety of workers or the community.

Site Background

On October 15, 2012, one of 98 storage bunkers at Explo Systems Inc. site exploded prompting investigations by the EPA, LDEQ, the Louisiana State Police, and other responders. The explosion shattered windows in the City of Minden, Louisiana (approximately 4 miles to the northeast), and generated a 7,000-foot mushroom cloud. Explo Systems was under contract with the Department of Army to demilitarize surplus munitions. The State Police found 10 million pounds of unsecured M6 (howitzer gunpowder) improperly stored outside of the bunkers and 8 million pounds of a variety of other explosives improperly stored inside bunkers. To keep the residents safe due to the potential risk, the town of Doyline, Louisiana (approximately 400 homes), was evacuated during operational hours from November 28 to December 7, 2013. In addition, the Youth Challenge Program (school) and non-essential personnel at Camp Minden were evacuated. The Webster Parish Jail at Camp Minden followed shelter-in-place procedures.

The State Police directed Explo Systems, Inc., to temporarily secure the M6 in available bunkers. This was completed in May 2013. In August 2013, Explo Systems Inc. declared bankruptcy and the Louisiana Military Department took ownership of the explosives at the site. EPA then initiated negotiations with all potentially responsible parties to eliminate the risks posed by the 18 million pounds of M6 and other explosives culminating in the October 28, 2014 Agreement.

For More Information

If you would like more information about the

Explo Systems, Inc. Site Removal Action, contact:

Paige Delgado

U.S. EPA Removal On-Scene Coordinator
214.665.2724 or 800.533.3508 (toll-free)

delgado.paige@epa.gov

Greg Fife

U.S. EPA Removal On-Scene Coordinator
214.665.6773 or 800.533.3508 (toll-free)

fife.greg@epa.gov

Jason McKinney

U.S. EPA Community Involvement Coordinator
214.665.8132 or 800.533.3508 (toll-free)

mckinney.jason@epa.gov

Donn Walters

U.S. EPA Community Involvement Superfund
Public Liaison

214.665.6483 or 800.533.3508 (toll-free)

walters.donn@epa.gov

Karen Price

Project Manager

Louisiana Department of Environment Quality
225.219.3612

karen.price2@la.gov

On The Web

On the internet, information about U.S. EPA Region 6 and the Superfund Program can be found at:

<http://www.epa.gov/earth1r6/6sf/6sf.htm>

All inquiries from the news media should be directed to the EPA Region 6 Press Office at 214.665.2200.



Region 6
1445 Ross Ave. (6SF-VO)
Dallas, TX 75202