



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL
MATERIALS AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

Umatilla Chemical Depot

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Army reports small sodium hydroxide spills on depot roadway

UMATILLA CHEMICAL DEPOT, Hermiston, Ore. - A tanker truck delivering sodium hydroxide (NaOH) to the Umatilla Chemical Agent Disposal Facility (UMCDF) accidentally spilled a small amount of the caustic solution on a paved depot roadway. Sodium hydroxide or "lye" is a common industrial chemical used in soap, laundering, and oven and drain cleaners. At the UMCDF, it's used to neutralize acid gases in the UMCDF Pollution Abatement System (PAS) and to decontaminate demilitarization machines.

Depot personnel trained in dealing with hazardous materials spills responded promptly. They remediated two small spills, each about two feet in diameter and less than a gallon each. The spills occurred at about 12:30 p.m.

There was no danger to the public and there were no injuries. Depot and UMCDF operations were not interrupted.

The two spills were safely remediated by neutralizing them with citric acid, per standard procedures for minor spills of this nature. One entrance to the installation was closed for a short time for spill response and a related depot Fire Department hazardous materials response exercise. A pipe flange on the tanker truck had apparently been damaged, and it was capped to prevent further leakage after the sodium hydroxide was safely unloaded at the disposal plant.

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