

General Atomics

3550 General Court
San Diego, California 92121



It is DTSC's mission to restore, protect and enhance the environment, to ensure public health, environmental quality and economic vitality, by regulating hazardous waste, conducting and overseeing cleanups, and developing and promoting pollution prevention.

State of California



California
Environmental
Protection Agency



Draft Hazardous Waste Facility Permit and Draft Negative Declaration

INTRODUCTION

The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal/EPA), Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is seeking public input on a draft **hazardous waste** permit for the General Atomics (GA) at its facility located on General Atomics Court in San Diego, California. The permit would authorize three areas for the continued storage and treatment of hazardous waste generated on-site, and to add two container rinsing units.

The treatment consists of the small batch scale units to consolidate, filter, neutralize and solidify hazardous waste contaminated with low-level radioactivity, also known as “**mixed waste**”.

FACILITY LOCATION

General Atomics is located approximately 13 miles north of downtown San Diego, just southwest of the convergence of Interstates 5 and 805 and one mile east of the Pacific Ocean at Genesee Avenue. The facility occupies roughly 120 acres zoned for scientific research and development and related industrial activity.

The University of California, the Salk Institute, Torrey Pines Golf Park, and Torrey Pines State Reserve are located within half a mile of the site. A day care facility is located at 10660 John Jay Hopkins Drive.

Public Notice, Hearing & Comment Period

DTSC will hold a public workshop and public hearing on the draft Hazardous Waste Facility Permit and draft Negative Declaration on December 19, 2001.

Workshop: 3 p.m. - 5 p.m.
Public Hearing: 6 p.m. - 8 p.m.

Location: San Diego Public Library / Riford Branch, 7555 Draper Avenue, La Jolla, California 92037

Members of the public are welcome to submit comments between November 19, 2001 and January 7, 2002 by writing to:

Walter Bahm
DTSC
700 Heinz Avenue, Suite 200
Berkeley, California 94710-2721

Phone: (510) 540-3957
Fax: (510) 540-3937
e-mail: wbahm@dtsc.ca.gov

FACILITY DESCRIPTION

Founded in 1955, GA is a California corporation that does research and development in advanced power generation systems, energy conservation, and material science. GA produces mixed waste as a byproduct of its research and development operations.

In addition to ongoing operations, the closure of some nuclear testing and production facilities on the site has resulted in the generation of mixed waste during the decontamination and decommissioning of equipment and buildings. Most of the mixed waste generated by these activities have already been shipped to offsite authorized disposal facilities.

In support of the research and development activities, GA operates three Nuclear Waste Processing Facilities NWPF #1 through 3 (Figure 1) to consolidate, treat, and store mixed waste it produces pending shipment to authorized offsite disposal facilities. GA has been operating with a temporary permit since March 23, 1989. Onsite disposal of mixed waste, or hazardous waste has never been permitted at GA. Under both federal and state law, DTSC must now consider whether GA is eligible for a hazardous waste facility permit. The Department of Health Services, Radiological Health Branch and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission regulate GA's nuclear operations.

The permit would allow GA to manage mixed waste generated on site. The permit and Part B application describe the mixed waste types, the storage and treatment operations, the facility design, reporting, contingency procedures and closure requirements. The draft permit does not

allow GA to receive either mixed or hazardous wastes from off-site sources.

PERMIT PROCESS

The owners of hazardous waste treatment, storage, and disposal facilities (TSDF) are required to obtain permits from the Department of Toxic Substances Control. The owner must submit a permit application, which contains technical information about the TSDF. This information includes equipment design, waste analysis plans, emergency response plans, closure plans, and other information. DTSC conducts a technical review of the permit application. Upon completion of technical review by DTSC a determination is made on whether the application meets all applicable standards. DTSC then either proposes to issue a draft permit or proposes to deny the permit application depending on the technical adequacy of the application. The public is advised of the proposal to issue a draft permit (or denial) by issuing a public notice regarding the draft permit through the local media (newspaper advertisement). Also, the public notice and a fact sheet are mailed to the public stating the basis for the proposed decision and announcing a minimum 45-day public comment period. During the public comment period, DTSC receives comments from the public regarding the proposed decision. A public hearing is held if requested by any member of the public or if DTSC determines there is significant public interest in the proposed decision. A court recorder is available at the public hearing to record public comments received. DTSC may revise the draft permit or change its decision based on public comments. Both the facility owner/operator

and participating public have a right to appeal the final permit decision.

DESCRIPTION OF THE WASTE

General Atomics submitted a Part B application in March 1996, revised in December 1998, March 1999 and May 2001, for the storage and treatment of mixed wastes at its facility in San Diego. DTSC reviewed the Part B application and supporting documentation and found the Part B application to be technically complete.

The majority of mixed waste generated by GA in the past results from decontamination and demolition activities at the facility. Typical liquid waste streams include laboratory wastes such as organic and inorganic solutions, reagents/spent solutions, alkaline and acid solutions, coolant waters, rinse waters, photochemicals, solvents and waste oils. The solid waste stream includes laboratory trash such as contaminated paper and rags, protective clothing, glassware, plasticware, tubing and fittings, wood and metal parts, spent high efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters, lead bricks, contaminated soil and contaminated equipment. The quantity of mixed waste is expected to decrease yearly as research facilities are closed and decommissioned.

In the future, small amounts of mixed waste, less than 2,000 lb. per month, may be generated from commercially funded research activities such as two small-scale on-site research reactors. Only a portion of this will be treated on-site.

Health Risk Assessment

A human health risk assessment was prepared to determine the potential human health impacts from the project. The assessment consists of:

- 1) a hazard identification;
- 2) an exposure assessment;
- 3) a review of the most recent toxicological data; and
- 4) a concluding risk characterization. It analyzed the potential effects of constituents of mixed waste on human health from normal operations and accidental release scenarios.

The potential for effects on human health from short-term exposure was evaluated in the risk assessment for the hazardous constituents. The detailed health risk assessment is available at repositories listed on the last page.

Based upon the risk evaluation, the proposed project would not pose a significant risk to the public health or the environment

Corrective Action Activities

In 1999, DTSC prepared a Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Assessment (RFA) report that identified eight Solid Waste Management Units (SWMUs) and one Area of Concern (AOC) at the GA facility. A SWMU is any facility equipment that handled hazardous waste or hazardous material that released or had the potential to release hazardous constituents to environmental media.

RCRA corrective action cleanup at the GA facility currently being overseen by the DTSC involves the removal of solvent contaminated soil adjacent to Building 37.

COMPLIANCE HISTORY

DTSC conducts periodic inspections of this facility. The last inspection was made in September 2000. Only minor record keeping violations were found. These violations have since been corrected and the facility is currently in compliance with hazardous waste regulations.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires DTSC to review the proposed permit approval for possible negative effect on the environment or public health. Based on the Initial Study, DTSC determined that GA's treatment and storage operations will not have an adverse impact on public health and the environment. Therefore, DTSC proposes to issue a negative declaration for this project.

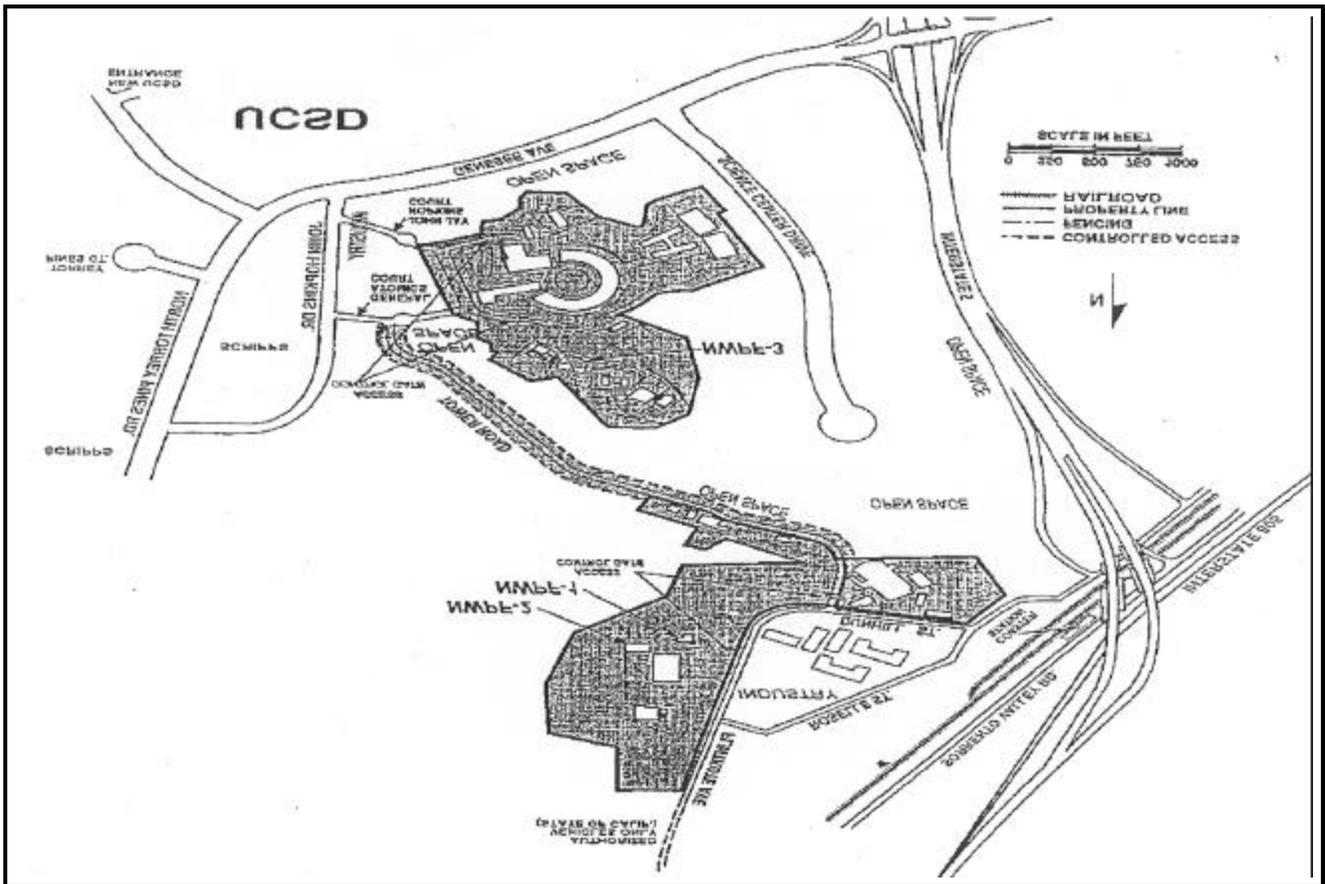


Figure 1: Location and Layout of the Nuclear Waste Processing Facilities (NWPFs) at General Atomics.

Glossary

Hazardous Waste - Solid, semi-solid, liquid or gaseous waste which pose a potential threat to public health or the environment and are known to be ignitable, corrosive, reactive, and/or toxic.

Mixed Waste (MW) - Mixed waste means waste that contains both hazardous waste and source, special nuclear, or byproduct material subject to the Atomic Energy Act of 1954.

Anuncio

Si prefiere hablar con alguien en español acerca de ésta información, favor de llamar a Evelia Rodriguez, Departamento de Control de Sustancias Tóxicas. El número de teléfono es (510) 540-3959.

For More Information

If you would like more information about the Site, please call Project Manager, Walter Bahm at (510) 540-3957 or DTSC Public Participation Specialist, Jesus Cruz at (510) 540-3933.

Information Repositories

The permit application, draft permit, Initial Study, and the draft Negative Declaration are available for public review at the following locations:

San Diego Public Library
LaJolla / Riford Branch
7555 Draper Avenue
La Jolla, California 92037
Phone (858) 552-1657

California Environmental Protection Agency
Department of Toxic Substances Control
700 Heinz Avenue, Suite 200
Berkeley, California 94710
Phone (510) 540-3800

The full administrative record is available at:

DTSC File Room
700 Heinz Avenue
Berkeley, California 94710-2721
Phone (510) 540-3800

Notice to Hearing Impaired Individuals

TDD users can obtain additional information about the Site by using the California State Relay Service (1-888-877-5378) to reach the Public Participation Specialist at (510) 540-3933.

PPS - Jesus Cruz
Department of Toxic Substances Control
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Berkeley, California 94710-2721