



Department of
Toxic Substances
Control

*Preventing
environmental
damage from
hazardous waste,
and restoring
contaminated
sites for all
Californians.*



State of California



California
Environmental
Protection Agency

Fact Sheet, August 2007

Public Comment Period on the Draft Phase I Closure Plan for the Sierra Army Depot Open Burn / Open Detonation RCRA Units

Introduction

The California Department of Toxic Substances Control (DTSC) is announcing a 30-day public comment period on the draft Phase I Closure Plan for the Open Burn/Open Detonation (OB/OD) units at Sierra Army Depot (SIAD). The closure of the OB/OD units at SIAD will address the investigation and any necessary cleanup of contamination caused by OB/OD operations. The contaminants of concern that are being investigated in the draft Phase I Closure Plan are unexploded ordnance, treatment kickout (shrapnel), munitions constituents (TNT for example), various metals, and chemicals, such as perchlorates.

This Fact Sheet Will Inform You About:

- Site Location and Background
- Closure Plan Phases
- Corrective Action
- Phase I Closure Plan Activities
- California Environmental Quality Act
- Next Steps
- Information Repositories

Public Comment Period and Public Hearing

DTSC encourages you to review and comment on the draft Phase I Closure Plan during the 30-day public comment period, which **begins on August 1, 2007 and ends August 31, 2007**. The draft Phase I Closure Plan will be available at the information repositories listed on page 4 of this fact sheet. DTSC also invites you to attend the public hearing and meeting for the draft Phase I Closure Plan, which will be held on **August 23, 2007 at 6:00 p.m.** at the following location:

Sierra Army Depot
Skedaddle Inn, Building 144
Susanville Road
Herlong, California 96113

Written comments must be postmarked by **August 31, 2007**, or emailed no later than 5:00 p.m. that same date and sent to:

Lorraine Larsen-Hallock, DTSC Project Manager
8800 Cal Center Drive
Sacramento, California 95826
Email: LLarsenh@dtsc.ca.gov



Location and Background

SIAD is located in Lassen County in Herlong, and is approximately 55 miles northwest of Reno, Nevada. It has operated as a military base for the United States Army since 1942. As a result of OB/OD operations that began in 1950, it is highly likely that contamination exists in the OB/OD units areas. The OB/OD units are grouped together in a large area of the base that comprises approximately 4000 total acres. OB/OD operations at SIAD included the treatment of outdated and discarded munitions, explosives, rocket propellant, rocket motors, demolitions charges, and black powder. The RCRA (Resource Conservation and Recovery Act) Open Burn unit is about 18 acres, and treatment operations there consisted of burning hazardous wastes in raised steel pans designed to withstand extremely high temperatures. The RCRA Open Detonation unit is about 35 acres, and consists of 14 pits used to treat hazardous waste through open detonation. The draft Phase I Closure Plan calls for keeping four of the pits operational in the event that emergency treatments are necessary as unexploded ordnances are found during the closure process. An emergency permit issued by DTSC will be required for any emergency treatment.



Photograph of Closed Detonation Pit

Closure Plan Phases

The closure process for the SIAD OB/OD units will consist of two major phases. The first phase, which the draft Phase I Closure Plan addresses, will include field investigations to determine whether releases of hazardous waste (unexploded ordnance) or hazardous constituents (metals or explosives) has resulted in contamination that would need to be cleaned up. The second phase, which the Phase II Closure Plan will address, will include characterization (if determined necessary through the Phase I field investigations) and will determine the most appropriate way to clean up the contamination. The Phase II Closure Plan will require another 30-day public comment period and public hearing similar to the process being conducted for the Phase I Closure Plan.

Corrective Action

The areas beyond the RCRA OB/OD unit boundaries are eligible for the Military Munitions Response Program (MMRP), which was established in 2001 to manage the environmental, health, and safety issues of unexploded ordnance, munitions constituents, and discarded military munitions. Under authority of the Phase I Closure Plan, investigation and cleanup of contamination beyond the boundaries of the RCRA OB/OD units will be conducted as part of the MMRP. However, RCRA corrective action requirements must be met and DTSC oversight will ensure compliance. In the event that any parts of the MMRP fail to meet RCRA corrective action requirements DTSC may issue a corrective action order for compliance.

Phase I Closure Plan Field Investigations

The Phase I closure process for the SIAD OB/OD units will include field investigations intended to characterize the contamination that has potentially impacted the soils, seasonal creeks, sediments, and groundwater within the OB/OD area. These investigations will include the following activities conducted to confirm the presence of contamination, and determine the extent of the contamination:

- Surface sweeps of the OB/OD area to locate, remove, and treat unexploded ordnance, such as small arms ammunition, explosive components, and projectiles, prior to further sampling activities.

- Investigation of the seasonal creeks near the OB/OD area by analyzing several surface water samples taken from them.
- Taking several samples of the sediments in the seasonal creek beds.
- Investigation of the surface and subsurface soils in the OB/OD area by taking numerous soil samples at various depths.
- Evaluation of soil characteristics and depth to groundwater to determine whether or not groundwater monitoring should be further investigated under the Phase II Closure Plan.

The surface sweeps of the OB/OD area may not locate all of the unexploded ordnance due to the vast size and plant growth of the area. In this case, the draft Phase I Closure Plan will recommend institutional controls of the area, such as land use restrictions and fencing, to protect human health and safety. The final determination of institutional controls will be considered under the Phase II Closure Plan. Following the field investigations a Risk Assessment will be conducted as part of the Phase II Closure Plan to determine if unsafe levels of contamination exist in the investigated areas. If unsafe levels of contamination are determined to be present, cleanup standards will be established, and a cleanup plan will be created and put into effect as part of the Phase II Closure Plan.

California Environmental Quality Act

A California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Notice of Exemption (NOE) has been determined applicable to the Phase I Closure Plan as there will be no environmental impacts as a result of the proposed project. The draft NOE will be available for review as part of the draft Phase I Closure Plan administrative record. The future Phase II Closure Plan project will be reviewed separately for CEQA considerations.

Next Steps

Following the close of the 30-day public comment period, DTSC will evaluate the comments submitted during the public comment period and public hearing, and issue a Response to Comments to those who submitted them. The Response to Comments will also be placed in the information repositories for public review. DTSC will not make a decision on the draft Phase I Closure Plan until the comments have been evaluated.

Information Repositories

The draft Phase I Closure Plan, NOE, and other project related documents, such as the Response to Comments, will be available for public review at the following information repositories:

Herlong Library
2067 California Street
Herlong, California 96113
(530) 827-2073

Susanville Library
1618 Main Street
Susanville, California 96130
(530) 251-8127

Washoe County Main Library
301 South Center Street
Reno, Nevada 89505
(775) 327-8300

Department of Toxic Substances Control
8800 Cal Center Drive
Sacramento, California 95826
(916) 255-3758

The draft Phase I Closure Plan and related project documents can also be viewed online at:

<http://www.dtsc.ca.gov/omf/projects/sierra-army-depot.cfm>

For More Information

For more information regarding the draft Phase I Closure Plan or about the project in general, please contact:

Lorraine Larsen-Hallock, DTSC Project Manager, at (916) 255-3578, or email her at Llarsenh@dtsc.ca.gov

For questions about the public participation process please contact:

Marcus Simpson, DTSC Public Participation Specialist, at (916) 255-6683, toll free at 1-866-495-5651, or email him at: MSimpson@dtsc.ca.gov

Please direct Media inquiries to:

Ron Baker, DTSC Public Information Officer, at (916) 324-3142 or email him at: RBaker@dtsc.ca.gov

Notice to Hearing Impaired Individuals

TDD users can obtain information about the OB/OD draft Phase I Closure Plan by using the California State Relay Service at (888) 877-5378. Please ask to speak to Marcus Simpson at (916) 255-6683.

Si desea informacion en espanol comuniquese con el: Sr. Jesus Cruz, al (866) 495-5651 o (916) 255-3315.