

NPL Site Narrative for Hanscom Field/ Hanscom Air Force Base

HANSCOM FIELD/HANSCOM AIR FORCE BASE Bedford, Massachusetts

Hanscom Air Force Base occupies approximately 1,120 acres in the towns of Bedford, Concord, Lexington, and Lincoln in Middlesex County, Massachusetts. The facility is located in a light industrial area of eastern Massachusetts. A public airfield was constructed at this location in 1941 and military operations began in 1942. In 1952, the Commonwealth ceded 396 acres of land and leased 641 acres to the Air Force; 83 acres were retained by the Commonwealth. After military flying activities ceased in 1973, the Commonwealth regained control of the leased portion of the base. The airfield and the surrounding land were given to the Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport), which operates a civilian airport as L.G. Hanscom Field. The Air Force still occupies the 396 acres ceded to it in 1952 and operates the Electronic Systems Division of the Air Force Systems Command as Hanscom Air Force Base. The entire original 1,120-acre area is considered a Federal facility.

During the 32 years that the Air Force occupied the airfield, numerous hazardous substances were used, generated, and disposed of on what is now Massport property and on the Airbase. These substances included chlorinated solvents, gasoline and jet fuel, aromatic solvents, tetraethyllead, and PCBs. A total of 14 possible source areas have been identified to date. Among them are: two former fire training areas, a paint waste disposal area, a jet fuel residue/tank sludge area, two landfills, a former industrial waste water treatment system, a former filter bed area, an elemental mercury spill, and a PCB transformer storage area.

Bedford draws its drinking water from ground water beneath the base. Three of the Town's wells were closed in 1984, when they were found to be contaminated with volatile organic compounds (VOCs). In addition, two wells for the Veterans Administration Hospital in Bedford were closed in 1980, when VOCs were detected in the well water. In 1991, the Town of Bedford conducted a remedial investigation at the base. Ground water and surface water samples contained VOCs and it was concluded that the base was a likely source of the contamination in the Town water supply.

Numerous remedial activities have taken place on both the Air Force and Massport properties to address areas of contamination. Drums have been removed at both the Paint Waste Disposal Area and the Jet Fuel Residue/Tank Sludge Area. Contaminated soils have been removed and placed in a secured landfill. A ground water remediation system has been constructed to remove VOC contamination from the ground water beneath the base.

For more information about the hazardous substances identified in this narrative summary, including general information regarding the effects of exposure to these substances on human health, please see the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) ToxFAQs. ATSDR ToxFAQs can be found on the Internet at [ATSDR - ToxFAQs](http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp) (<http://www.atsdr.cdc.gov/toxfaqs/index.asp>) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.