

NPL Site Narrative for Homestead Air Force Base

HOMESTEAD AIR FORCE BASE Homestead, Florida

Conditions at proposal (July 14, 1989): Homestead Air Force Base is in Dade County, approximately 25 miles southwest of Miami and 7 miles east of Homestead, Florida. The facility encompasses 2,916 acres with additional easements of 429 acres. The area around the base is mostly agricultural and residential. The base has jurisdiction over several remote annexes, but there is little evidence that hazardous substances have been disposed of at those locations.

The base was activated in September 1942 and initially was operated by the Army Air Transport Command. After extensive hurricane damage in 1945, the base was turned over to Dade County, which used it for small commercial and industrial operations. In 1953, the Air Force acquired the base and rebuilt it.

Wastes have been disposed of on-site since the facility's inception. A landfill was operated in the 1940s, but little is known about this operation. During Dade County's ownership, electroplating operations were conducted on the site, and plating wastes containing heavy metals and cyanides were allegedly disposed of directly on the ground.

After the Air Force assumed control in 1953, hazardous substances were disposed of in Fire Training Area 3, which was unlined and had no system to collect residual fluids, and the Residual Pesticide Disposal Area. Several spills also occurred, including one of PCBs from an electrical transformer.

Homestead Air Force Base is participating in the Installation Restoration Program (IRP), established in 1978. Under this program, the Department of Defense seeks to identify, investigate, and clean up contamination from hazardous materials. IRP studies have detected high concentrations of ethyl ether in ground water throughout and downgradient of Fire Training Area 3. Approximately 5,500 gallons of ethyl ether were disposed of in the area in January 1984. The Biscayne Aquifer, which underlies the site, has been designated by EPA as a sole source aquifer under the Safe Drinking Water Act. An estimated 16,600 people obtain drinking water from wells into the aquifer within 3 miles of the hazardous substances on the base.

The base is surrounded by a perimeter canal, which discharges into Military Canal and ultimately into Biscayne Bay 2 miles to the west.

The Air Force plans further investigations of releases of hazardous substances and their migration under the IRP and a permit issued under Subtitle C of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act and incorporating corrective action.

Status (August 30, 1990): EPA, the Florida Department of Environmental Regulation, and the Air Force are negotiating an Interagency Agreement under CERCLA Section 120 to cover response activities at 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.