

# NPL Site Narrative for Aberdeen Proving Ground (Edgewood Area)

## ABERDEEN PROVING GROUND (EDGEWOOD AREA)

### Edgewood, Maryland

**Conditions at proposal (April 10, 1985):** Aberdeen Proving Ground (APG) occupies some 79,000 acres of land and water in southern Harford County and southeastern Baltimore County, Maryland, near the head of Chesapeake Bay. The Edgewood Area occupies 17,000 land acres, including Gunpowder Neck, Pooles Island, Carroll Island, and Graces Quarters.

Until 1971, Edgewood Area operated as a distinct military entity known as the Edgewood Arsenal. The primary mission of the Arsenal, and subsequently the Edgewood Area of APG, has been developing and testing of chemical agent munitions. According to an Army Installation Assessment report (1976): "From 1917 to the present, the Edgewood Area has conducted chemical research programs, manufactured chemical agents, and tested, stored and disposed of toxic materials. As a result of these extensive programs, the Edgewood Area has large areas of land and water, and numerous buildings, which are contaminated or suspected of contamination." A "contamination map" and discussion in the report indicate "contaminated or potentially contaminated" areas in virtually every land portion and some water portions of Edgewood Area.

Among the substances disposed of are significant quantities of napalm, white phosphorus, chemical agents, and nerve agents, which are toxic and persistent enough to threaten human health and the environment for months or even years.

APG 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. As part of IRP, the Army in 1977 and 1978 monitored "O" Field, Canal Creek, "J" Field, Graces Quarters, and Carroll Island. Evidence was found of substantial contamination of surface water and ground water near "O" Field, which includes a wetlands habitat for the bald eagle designated an endangered species by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In February 1984, the State recommended that four Edgewood Area standby wells in the Canal Creek area be immediately removed from service because of high levels of volatile organic chemicals detected during routine testing in late 1983. These wells served about 3,000 persons. Also within 3 miles of the facility are well fields used by the Harford County Department of Public Works and the Joppatowne Sanitary Subdistrict. These two fields serve about 35,000 persons.

The Army continues to monitor surface water and ground water and has undertaken a detailed hydrogeological study in the vicinity of "O" Field.

The facility acquired Interim Status under Subtitle C of the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) when the Army filed Part A of a permit application.

**Status (February 21, 1990):** On September 30, 1986, EPA issued Part B of the RCRA permit which includes corrective action provisions.

EPA and the Army have negotiated a CERCLA Section 120 Interagency Agreement for investigation and cleanup of the site, which has been divided into eight study areas. An ongoing RCRA facility assessment will identify additional areas requiring further investigation.

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.