NPL Site Narrative for Air Force Plant 85

AIR FORCE PLANT 85
Columbus, Ohio

Air Force Plant 85 (AFP 85) occupies about 420 acres in an urban industrial area of central Ohio. The site is located 6 miles from downtown Columbus, just south of the Port Columbus International Airport and north of the Defense Construction and Supply Center. Nearby towns include Whitehall, Gahanna, and Bexley.

AFP 85 began operating in 1941 as an aircraft production and maintenance facility. During World War II, the plant produced 3,500 naval aircraft and employed 24,000 people. In 1982, the plant was transferred from the U.S. Navy to the U.S. Air Force, redesignated Air Force Plant 85, and began producing B-1B bombers, MX Peacekeeper missiles, and space shuttle components. Since 1988, the plant has been operated for the Air Force by McDonnell-Douglas for the production of aircraft parts. Approximately 3,250 people work at the plant.

Installation Restoration Program studies conducted from 1984 to 1990 identified 10 sources of potential hazardous waste contamination, including Turkey Run and Mason's Run, two streams that join Big Walnut Creek 5 miles south of the plant. Big Walnut Creek is used for sport fishing. Six sources have been evaluated.

The Coal Pile Area has been used to store coal since 1941. For 38 years, coal pile leachate containing sulfuric acid, ammonia, and heavy metals periodically entered Mason's Run. Samples from the source contained chromium, copper, nickel, and zinc. Surface water downstream from this source contained copper; sediments contained cadmium, chromium, mercury, and polyaromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs).

The PCB Spill Area covers 164 square feet of contaminated soil. The area resulted from a malfunctioning drain valve that released several gallons of transformer oil containing PCBs. PCB contamination was found in soils to a depth of 7.5 feet.

From 1941 to 1989 the James Road Hazardous Waste Pad (JRHWP) was used to store drums and tanks of hazardous wastes such as waste solvents and paint strippers. Contaminants such as 1,1,1-trichloroethane, acetone, phenolic paint strippers, electroplating wastes, waste cyanide and cyanide sludge, and other hazardous substances have been detected in this area. Several spills have been documented.

The Fire Department Training Area (FDTA) is located approximately 300 feet from the JRHWP. Soil sampling indicated that hazardous substances in these two sources are similar; the hazardous wastes that were disposed or burned at the FDTA were those stored at the JRHWP. For 36 years the FDTA was used for disposal and burning of contaminated aircraft fuel, solvents, waste oil, and waste magnesium chips.

The Coal Pile Leachate Holding Tank is a part of the onsite wastewater treatment plant. In May 1983, approximately 50,000 gallons of leachate from the ruptured holding tank were released inadvertently to Mason's Run through the storm drainage system, resulting in copper in surface water, and cadmium, chromium, mercury, and PAHs in sediments downstream from this source.

The Stripping Pad was a concrete pad used to strip paint from aircraft from 1941 to 1953. Approximately 34,320 gallons of spent solvents and paint chips were washed off of aircraft and discharged to the storm water drainage system leading to Mason's Run. Surface water downstream from this source contains copper, 1,1,1-trichloroethane, bromodichloroemethane, chloroform, and trichloroethylene; sediments contain cadmium, chromium, mercury, and PAHs.

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) or by telephone at 1-888-42-ATSDR or 1-888-422-8737.