

ENVIRONMENTAL Fact Sheet



Former Burns Radar Station Asbestos Site, Harney County, Oregon

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 10

June 2004

Asbestos-laden Debris Removed from Former Burns Radar Station

EPA AND THE OREGON DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY (DEQ) ARE REMOVING ASBESTOS-LADEN DEBRIS from the former Burns Air Force Radar Station, starting in June 2004, to protect human health and the environment. The site is located on top of Burns Butte near the intersection of Hines Logging Road and Radar Lane, about four miles southwest of the cities of Burns and Hines Oregon.

The military facility was constructed between 1954 and 1958 and was operated and maintained by the Air Force until 1970. Since then, portions of the site have been owned or leased by various private individuals, school districts and government agencies. The site has been heavily vandalized and is currently in disrepair.



EPA and DEQ will demolish buildings in danger of collapse.

Why does this site need to be cleaned up?

The primary concerns at this site are asbestos-containing materials from deteriorating abandoned buildings. In addition, some of the surface soil is contaminated with polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs).

What is asbestos and how does it pose a risk to people and wildlife?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral that was highly valued as a building material in the mid-twentieth century because of its fire-resistant properties. However, it has been found that asbestos releases microscopic fibers into the air. These fibers have been proven to cause lung cancer and other lung diseases if inhaled. For more information about asbestos and the health risks, visit the Oregon Department of Human Services website: www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/superfund/bafsite.cfm or www.dhs.state.or.us/publichealth/superfund/docs/bafphc.pdf

EPA has also found PCBs in some surface soils at the site. PCBs are generally a waste product from transformers disposed of on site.

Who may be affected by this contamination?

Communication workers, recreationists or trespassers at the site may be exposed to asbestos and PCB contamination.

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What is being done to clean up the site?

- EPA will remove asbestos insulation surrounding the steam pipes, boilers and associated piping, and take the debris to an approved off-site disposal location.
- EPA will demolish the buildings containing hazardous substances that are in danger of collapse, and will take the debris to an approved off-site disposal location.
- DEQ will demolish additional buildings at the site and will dispose of the materials off site.
- EPA will excavate and remove surface soil contaminated with (PCBs) and take it to an approved off-site disposal location. The excavated areas will be backfilled with clean soil.
- EPA and DEQ will evaluate the need for further sampling to determine the extent of asbestos and PCB contamination.

Where can I go to learn more about the Burns asbestos and PCB removal?

You can review the documents summarizing cleanup decisions at the EPA website: www.epaosc.net/BurnsAsbestosRemoval. Documents are also in the information repository located at:

U.S.EPA Record Center
1200 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101-1128
1-800-424-4372

Information about DEQ sampling and cleanup activity at the site can be found on the DEQ website at: www.deq.state.or.us/wmc/cleanup/BurnsAF.htm.

For more information, please contact —

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