



U.S. ARMY CHEMICAL MATERIALS AGENCY

Chemical Weapons Convention

Overview

On April 29, 1997, the *Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling, and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction*, known as the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), entered into force. At that time, the United States and 86 other nations became the first countries to sign and ratify the CWC. In doing so, the United States agreed to destroy all their chemical weapons and former chemical weapons production facilities and to abide by prohibitions from development, use, production and acquisition of chemical weapons. Today, more than 180 nations have ratified the CWC.

Since entry into force of the CWC, the United States has destroyed more than 1.9 million munitions and more than 15,000 metric tons of chemical agent, representing more than 55 percent of its chemical weapons stockpile. Other major CWC milestone accomplishments include the total destruction of U.S. unfilled munitions and binary projectile inventory, the complete destruction of the nation's former chemical weapons production facilities and the elimination of all binary chemical weapon materiel.

The U.S. Army Chemical Materials Agency (CMA) is responsible for safely storing, and ultimately destroying the majority of the remaining U.S. aging chemical weapons and related materials. Additional responsibility for destroying U.S. chemical weapons stored at Army installations in Kentucky and Colorado falls under the U.S. Department of Defense's Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives Program.

Achievements

In December 2000, CMA destroyed the last of the chemical weapons stored on Johnston Island in the Pacific Ocean using the world's first full-scale chemical weapons disposal facility. In March 2006, CMA completed destruction of the mustard stockpile stored at the Edgewood Area of Aberdeen Proving Ground, Md. CMA also completed destruction of the VX nerve agent stockpile at Newport Chemical Depot, Ind., in September 2008.

CMA continues to operate disposal facilities at Anniston Army Depot, Ala.; Pine Bluff Arsenal, Ark.; Deseret Chemical Depot, Utah; and Umatilla Chemical Depot, Ore.

CMA also maintains responsibility for the destruction of non-stockpile related chemical warfare materiel, including; former chemical warfare production facilities, binary chemical weapons, miscellaneous chemical warfare materiel and recovered chemical warfare materiel.

CWC treaty officials confirmed the complete destruction of declared miscellaneous materiel in 2002, the absolute destruction of the nation's former chemical warfare production facilities in December 2006, and the destruction of the binary chemical weapon inventory in November 2007. All three milestones were accomplished safely and ahead of CWC schedule deadlines.

The Chemical Weapons Convention

The CWC prohibits the development, production, stockpiling, transfer and use of chemical weapons. The United States is a State Party to the CWC. The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), an international organization headquartered in The Hague, Netherlands, oversees Convention implementation.

The CWC prohibits States Parties from

- Developing, producing, acquiring, retaining or transferring chemical weapons
- Using chemical weapons
- Engaging in any military preparations to use chemical weapons and
- Assisting, encouraging or inducing anyone, in any way, to engage in any activity prohibited under the Convention.

The CWC also requires States Parties with chemical weapons or chemical weapons production facilities to destroy them in an environmentally safe manner. It forbids disposal by open pit burning, land burial or dumping in any water body.

For more information, contact the CMA Public Affairs Office at (410) 436-3629 (800) 488-0648



Chemical Weapons Convention (continued)

CMA continues to meet CWC requirements in responding to unplanned recovered chemical warfare materiel – treating items on site using proven disposal technologies and notifying treaty officials of chemical warfare disposal efforts.

Challenges

The CWC required participating countries to destroy 100 percent of their chemical weapons stockpiles within 10 years, or by April 29, 2007, for original signatories. The CWC also set intermediate stockpile destruction deadlines, including 1 percent destroyed by April 2000 and 20 percent by April 2002. The United States was granted an extension of the 45 percent milestone, extending it from April 2004 to December 2007. The nation then succeeded in meeting all three intermediate deadlines with an impressive safety and environmental record.

In April 2006, the United States was granted a five-year extension to the original 2007 deadline by OPCW, the international organization overseeing CWC compliance for 100 percent stockpile destruction. However, in its extension request letter, the United States notified the OPCW that it does not currently forecast 100 percent destruction by the new deadline, but remains firmly committed to the accord and will complete its stockpile destruction under international observation as quickly as possible.

Several factors contributed to the extension request:

- delays in obtaining environmental permits for disposal facilities
- lower than estimated destruction processing rates
- work stoppages to investigate and resolve problems
- development of protocols to improve operational safety
- deteriorating munitions requiring special handling
- conduct of maintenance activities requiring more down time than originally projected
- facility start-up delays caused by additional community emergency preparedness requirements

The United States will continue to destroy chemical weapons safely, expeditiously and in full compliance with the treaty.

Additional resources

For more information on CMA and its role in safely storing and destroying U.S. chemical materials, please visit www.cma.army.mil. Detailed CWC and OPCW information can be found at www.opcw.org.

Meeting Chemical Weapons Convention Destruction Deadlines

The CWC sets weapons destruction requirements with accompanying deadlines for each category of chemical weapons. This table shows the destruction requirements and deadlines that apply to the United States and the status of the U.S. effort to meet them.

DESTRUCTION REQUIREMENT	DEADLINE	U.S. STATUS
1 percent destruction of Category 1 chemical weapons	April 2000	Met deadline in September 1997
20 percent destruction of Category 1 chemical weapons	April 2002	Met deadline in July 2001
45 percent destruction of Category 1 chemical weapons	Originally April 2004, extended to December 2007	Met deadline in June 2007
100 percent destruction of Category 1 chemical weapons	Originally April 2007, extended to April 2012	OPCW granted extension to April 2012
80 percent destruction of chemical weapons production capacity	April 2005	Met deadline in December 2003
100 percent destruction of chemical weapons production capacity	April 2007	Met deadline in December 2006
100 percent destruction of Category 3 chemical weapons	April 2002	Met deadline in March 2002