



SITE: FORT DEVENS

United States
Environmental Protection
Agency
Region I

Office of
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John F. Kennedy Federal Building
Boston, Massachusetts 02203

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EPA Environmental News

Jim Byrne, EPA Project Manager 617/573-5799
Tim Prior, Army Project Manger 508/772-2420
Jim Sebastian, EPA Public Affairs 617/565-3423
Alex Paquin, Army Public Affairs 508/796-2159

For more information call

May 13, 1991

ARMY, EPA SIGN SUPERFUND AGREEMENT AT FORT DEVENS

FORT DEVENS, MA - The U.S. Army and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency signed an agreement today outlining their roles and responsibilities in the investigation and cleanup of hazardous waste at Fort Devens and the Fort Devens Sudbury Training Annex.

The Interagency Agreement facilitates EPA oversight of Army work, specifies requirements for the delivery of major reports, and ensures compliance with all appropriate laws and regulations.

Colonel Richard W. Hoover, Fort Devens Installation Commander announced today, "These agreements are the result of hard work and close coordination between the Army and EPA. We look forward to continued cooperation over the next several years as the installations undergo complete cleanups."

EPA Regional Administrator Julie Belaga signed the agreement today saying, "This type of cooperation is essential for continuing work at these sites. The Army's environmental initiatives combined with the Superfund law will ensure a comprehensive solution to the hazardous waste problems at both Devens sites."

Some of the major points of the agreement include:

- *Dividing the installations into groups of contaminated areas to more effectively manage the investigation and cleanup;
- *Establishing requirements for the investigation and cleanup activities consistent with state and federal laws;
- *Coordinating environmental work with the mission and ongoing support activities at Fort Devens;
- *Identifying removal, or immediate cleanup, activities that might be necessary;

- *Providing for appropriate involvement by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts;
- *Providing for continued Army involvement and completion of all cleanup activities in the event of partial or complete base closure

The Agreement is the first of its kind to be signed in Massachusetts. Officials are working on a similar agreement at the Massachusetts Military Reservation on Cape Cod. The Federal Facilities Agreement will be available for public comment for 30 days. Copies are available for review at the Fort Devens Public Affairs Office, the EPA' regional office in Boston and at local public libraries in abutting towns at both installations.

The Army first began to investigate contamination at Fort Devens in 1978 under the Installation and Restoration Program (IRP), a Department of Defense effort to address contamination at military facilities nationwide. IRP studies have identified 54 potential hazardous waste sites at Fort Devens and at least a dozen at the Sudbury Training Annex.

Areas of contamination at Fort Devens include a 15 acre disposal area for spent explosives, a fifty acre sanitary landfill containing everything from household waste to asbestos and waste oil, and a building where battery acids, PCBs, pesticides and solvents have been stored. Monitoring wells near the landfill have detected cadmium, lead, mercury, iron and arsenic according to tests conducted by an Army contractor in 1987. An estimated 21,700 fort employees and Ayer residents obtain drinking water from wells within three miles of the landfill.

At the Sudbury Training Annex various contaminated areas contain explosive residues, chemical laboratory wastes, oil lubricants, and other toxic materials. These substances resulted largely from troop training and laboratory activities in the 1950's when the facility was known as the U.S. Army Natick Research and Development Command. An estimated 35,700 people obtain drinking water within three miles of the waste areas. In 1985, 100-200 gallons of PCB-containing oil spilled from an old transformer in a remote abandoned area of the Annex. The Army removed the much of the oil along with 70 tons of contaminated soil.

Currently, the Army is developing comprehensive plans to more accurately identify contaminated areas at the installations. Investigation work for some of the sites is scheduled to begin this summer.

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Jim Sebastian, EPA (617) 565-3423
Jeff Waugh, Ft. Devens (508) 772-2420

For more information call

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MEDIA ADVISORY.....MEDIA ADVISORY.....MEDIA ADVISORY.....MEDIA

A press conference will be held Monday, May 13 to commemorate the signing of an **Interagency Agreement for Fort Devens and the Fort Devens Sudbury Training Annex**. The U.S. Army and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency will sign the agreement which outlines the roles, responsibilities, and schedules for the investigation and cleanup of **Superfund** hazardous waste areas at the installations.

Participants will include:

- * Julie Belaga, Regional Administrator, U.S. EPA, Region I
- * Colonel Richard W. Hoover, Installation Commander, Ft. Devens
- * other EPA and Army project personnel

The press conference will begin at **3:00 PM** at the Directorate of Reserve Component Support (Building 2730) at Fort Devens.

Members of the press are asked to arrive at **2:30**.

Directions: From Boston or points west - take Rte 2 to the Fort Devens Exit. This entrance is known as the Jackson Gate. After checking in at the gate, follow Jackson Road straight for one mile. The Directorate of Reserve Component Support is at the end of the road to the right. Parking is on the east (left) side of the building.