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Region 1: New England

You are here: [EPA Home](#) [EPA Newsroom](#) Removal of Hazardous Waste Begins at Concord, Mass...

Removal of Hazardous Waste Begins at Concord, Mass. Superfund Site

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(Boston, Mass. - Jan 10, 2008) -This week EPA began a "Time Critical Removal Action" at the Nuclear Metals, Inc. Superfund site, in Concord Mass., to remove containers of hazardous substances within the facility that pose a risk of fire or explosion.

EPA has undertaken the action at the request of the Concord Fire Department which expressed concern about the facility's ability to adequately manage combustible and flammable hazardous materials following a June 2007 fire at the site.

The Concord site is owned and operated by Starmet Corp. (formerly Nuclear Metals, Inc.) and other affiliated companies which conduct specialty metals operations at the facility. A small isolated fire broke out inside the Starmet facility on June 26, 2007, which was contained and extinguished by both the Concord Fire Department (CFD) and the Mass. Dept. of Fire Services. Various town and state agencies, along with EPA, participated in the response.

Following the fire, EPA inventoried containers of hazardous substances in facility buildings. These included materials that could present a fire or chemical hazards risk, and materials that increase the risk of accelerating a fire due to chemical reactivity or explosion, and/or the risk to personnel involved in firefighting or response activities. Flammable liquids, compressed natural gas cylinders, toxic compressed gas cylinders, caustic materials, flammable metal powders and other hazardous materials were all identified at the facility.

The majority of the containers were improperly stored and located in portions of the facility buildings that are no longer used for manufacturing. These findings prompted EPA to expand sampling to test for radiation. After collecting over 1,300 wipe samples, the results indicated varying levels of radioactive contamination on the exterior surface of some of the containers stored in the facility buildings. Air monitoring conducted by EPA at the time of the fire showed no airborne radiation was released as a result of the incident.

CFD ordered Starmet to address the fire safety hazard at the site and provide a plan for the proper storage of all combustible and flammable hazardous materials currently stored on-site. After CFD determined that Starmet had failed to fully comply with the order based on a claim of lack of resources, CFD sought EPA's assistance for the removal of all containers stored in the facility buildings that pose a risk of a future fire or explosion. EPA will remove the containers and dispose of them at appropriately-licensed disposal facilities, including, if necessary, facilities that are licensed to accept radioactive waste.

While Starmet is licensed by the Mass. Dept. of Public Health's Radiation Control Program to possess radioactive materials, it no longer manufactures products with radioactive materials. Starmet manufactured

depleted uranium tipped munitions for the U.S. Army at the Site from the 1970s until 1999.

The Nuclear Metals Inc. site was added to the Superfund National Priority List in June 2001. The EPA list is made up of the country's most serious hazardous waste sites identified for possible long-term cleanup.

In 2002, EPA spent over \$1 million on a previous time-critical removal action to conduct test pits and soil sampling in the "old landfill" area of the site, and to install a permanent fence around the old landfill and temporary covers over the holding basin and old landfill. In 2003, EPA entered into an agreement with the U.S. Army, the U.S. Department of Energy, Whittaker Corp., MONY Life Insurance Co. and Textron Inc. to conduct a remedial investigation and feasibility study for the entire site.

More Information:

EPA information on [Starmet / Nuclear Metals, Inc. Superfund Site](http://epa.gov/region1/superfund/sites/nmi) (epa.gov/region1/superfund/sites/nmi)

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