



# THE MEMPHIS DEPOT TENNESSEE

---

## ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD COVER SHEET

AR File Number 65

**Defense Distribution Depot Memphis Tennessee  
Fact Sheet  
July 1994**

*This fact sheet is part of a series designed to inform residents and local officials of the Depot's ongoing installation restoration program.*

**INTRODUCTION**

In 1980, Congress passed the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA) which provided the mandate to cleanup abandoned or former hazardous waste sites. Congress made the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the lead agency in implementing CERCLA. Facilities which pose a potential risk to the health of people or the environment are placed on the National Priorities List (NPL) and regulated under CERCLA.

**WHERE IS THE DEFENSE DISTRIBUTION DEPOT?**

The Defense Distribution Depot (DDMT) covers 642 acres of federal land located in a mixed residential, commercial, and industrial land use area one mile north of the Memphis International Airport in south central Memphis. The facility is bordered on the north by Dunn Avenue, Perry Road on the west, Ball Road on the south, and Airways Boulevard on the east.

**WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE DEPOT?**

The Depot was established in 1942 and was previously a cotton farm. In 1962 the Defense Logistics Agency assumed command of the Depot with a primary mission of the receipt, storage, and shipment of a variety of stock items such as clothing, medicines, construction supplies, and hazardous materials (i.e. bulk quantities of household cleaners). Between 1954 and 1970 solid waste and chemicals were buried in the facilities landfill area, known as Dunn Field. In 1981, DLA began evaluating their past management of hazardous waste at DLA Installations around the world. In 1988, the Depot began an investigation at their facility to test for soil and groundwater contamination. In 1992, the EPA placed the Depot on the NPL because of the potential for contamination from Dunn Field to reach the Memphis Sand Aquifer, where Memphis draws its drinking water.

**CLEANUP PROCESS**

To understand the CERCLA process, it is necessary to understand the cleanup program. Under this program, EPA takes long-term actions to stop or greatly reduce releases of hazardous substances that are serious but not immediately life threatening. Interim cleanup actions are emergency actions necessary to stop releases of hazardous substances that pose an immediate threat to human health and the environment. They may be taken at any point in the process.

The cleanup process begins with a preliminary assessment/site investigation (PA/SI). This is conducted to determine whether the facility poses a significant enough hazard to warrant

further study and investigation. The facility is then ranked using the Hazard Ranking System (HRS), a numerical ranking system used to identify the facility's potential hazard to the environment and public health. A facility's HRS score determines their placement on the NPL. When a facility is added to the NPL, a remedial investigation (RI) is conducted to assess the extent and nature of the contamination and the potential risks. A feasibility study (FS) is then prepared to evaluate various cleanup alternatives. Following a public comment period on the preferred alternative and the draft FS report, the facility, with concurrence from the EPA and the State, chooses a specific cleanup plan and outlines its selection in a Record of Decision (ROD).

Once the remedial design (RD) is completed, the cleanup work, or remedial action (RA), can begin. After RD/RA activities have been completed, the facility is monitored to ensure the effectiveness of the response. Certain measures may require ongoing operation or periodic maintenance.

### **PRELIMINARY FINDINGS**

In 1988, a preliminary Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) was conducted to test the soil and groundwater. The initial investigation was completed in 1990. The testing found the following:

- Low levels of volatile organic chemicals (i.e. degreasers and paint removers), heavy metals and pesticides in the sediment at the bottom of the fire reservoir and the golf course pond
- Soil samples taken at former chemical spill sites showed volatile organic chemicals, hydrocarbons and pesticides
- The groundwater monitoring wells indicated low levels of volatile organic chemicals and heavy metals in the upper aquifer, the Fluvial Aquifer
- The potential risk to human health is the contamination of the Memphis Sand Aquifer; however, the testing has found no contamination there.
- Surface water testing indicated little or no risk existed from exposure because the surface water is not used for drinking water or recreation.

### **DDMT'S RESTORATION PROGRESS REPORT**

- \* July 1993 - began designing an Interim Remedial Action for the groundwater under Dunn Field.
- \* November 1993 - began planning for the follow on RI/FS to determine the full extent of contamination as well as recommend appropriate cleanup actions. The follow-on RI/FS testing and reporting should be completed by late 1995.
- \* February 1994 - DDMT established a Technical Review Committee (TRC).
- \* June 1994 - DDMT established a Restoration Advisory Board using the TRC as the selection committee.

## **FUTURE PLANS**

- \* Signing of Federal Facility Agreement.
- \* Completion of restoration workplans for the facility.
- \* The cleanup program will continue at DDMT until the facility is completely restored.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

Public information repositories have been established for public access to fact sheets, press releases, and reports regarding site investigations, studies, and other activities. The information contained in the repositories is also available in the Environmental Office at DDMT. The repositories are located at:

The Memphis/Shelby County Public Library  
Main Branch - Government and Law Section  
1850 Peabody Avenue  
Memphis, TN 38104-4025  
(901) 725-8877

Cherokee Public Library  
3300 Sharp Avenue  
Memphis, TN 38111-3758  
(901) 743-3655

The Memphis/Shelby County Public Health Department  
Pollution Control Division  
814 Jefferson Avenue  
Memphis, TN 38106  
(901)-576-7741

## **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION**

To request further information, call (901) 775-4379 or write to:  
Defense Distribution Depot Memphis  
Environmental Protection and Safety Office, DDMT-DE  
2163 Airways Blvd.  
Memphis, TN 38114-5210

**FINAL PAGE**

**ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD**

**FINAL PAGE**

**FINAL PAGE**

**ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD**

**FINAL PAGE**