

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

Mercury Management

“DNSC is responsible for providing safe, secure, and environmentally sound storage for the national defense stockpile.”

Cornel Holder, Administrator,
Defense National Stockpile Center

The Defense National Stockpile Center

The United States defense national stockpile was established after World War II to ensure that the United States would have access to commodities needed for defense and other critical uses in times of national emergency. The Defense National Stockpile Center (DNSC) is responsible for all the commodities in the stockpile.

Under the guidance of the Defense Logistics Agency, DNSC serves the nation in three ways:

- Stockpiling strategic and critical materials to minimize the United States' dependence on foreign suppliers in times of national emergency
- Managing the safe, secure, and environmentally sound storage of the stockpile
- Offering in the open market stockpile materials that are excess to Department of Defense needs and that have been approved for sale

DNSC stores a variety of commodities at government and private industry properties nationwide, including 4,436 metric tons of elemental mercury. DNSC is committed to ensuring safety in all stockpile operations and complying with all applicable federal, state, and local regulations in the storage, disposal, or sale of stockpile commodities.

The mercury is stored in secure warehouses at four locations: New Haven, Indiana; Warren, Ohio; Hillsborough, New Jersey; and at the Department of Energy's (DOE) Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. All DNSC depots and the DOE complex have controlled access and other security measures in place.

The mercury has been safely stored for more than 50 years in flasks of varied construction, each containing 76 pounds (net weight) of mercury. Most of the mercury flasks date from the 1940s and 1950s. The mercury flasks at the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge are grouped on wooden box pallets. They are inspected regularly to ensure that the flasks and pallets are in good condition. The flasks at the New Haven, Warren, and Somerville [Hillsborough] Depots were recently over-packed. Over-packing consisted of sealing six flasks in a plastic liner in a 30-gallon steel drum lined with a chemical coating with a cushioning material that doubles as an absorbent mat.

DNSC is preparing the Mercury Management Environmental Impact Statement (MM EIS) because the mercury in the stockpile has been declared excess to national defense needs and DNSC must identify a long-term mercury management strategy. Although DNSC's excess mercury is eligible for sale in the open market, DNSC stopped selling it in 1994 due to environmental concerns. The MM EIS will analyze a range of reasonable alternatives for the long-term management of the mercury and their potential impacts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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