



Chicago North, Illinois, Site

This fact sheet provides information about the Chicago North, Illinois, Site. This site is managed by the U.S. Department of Energy Office of Legacy Management under the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program.

Site Description and History

The Chicago North, Illinois, Site (formerly the National Guard Armory) is located at East 52nd Street and Cottage Grove Avenue in Chicago, approximately 6 miles south of the downtown business district. The 290,000-square-foot concrete and stone facility consists of an arena with bleachers at the center of the building, and classrooms, offices, storage areas, and garages at the north and south ends.

In 1942, the Manhattan Engineer District (MED) leased the National Guard Armory to store and process uranium metal. The MED also used the armory as the main procurement and shipping location for its Metallurgical Laboratory. Although not verified by historical records, the armory storeroom was believed to have been used to store uranium shavings and grinding wastes. One of several uranium fires was reported to have occurred in the northeast corner of the armory storeroom. A second fire also contaminated both the receiving area and the storeroom.

The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission (AEC), which succeeded the MED, terminated the use of the armory in 1951 and returned the site to the State of Illinois. MED disposed of contaminated soil removed from the arena. According to interviews with personnel, an effort was made to decontaminate some arena bleachers as well. No records could be found to indicate where the contaminated material was taken or whether radiological surveys or decontamination was conducted. Because of these uncertainties, the Energy Research and Development Agency, predecessor to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), conducted a comprehensive radiological survey to determine whether any contamination remained at the site.

Results of the survey, which was performed from September 1977 to October 1978, indicated that residual



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Location of the Chicago North, Illinois, Site

contamination at the site exceeded guidelines in effect at that time and that uranium was the primary contaminant of concern. Based on these results, DOE designated the Chicago North site for remedial action under the Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program (FUSRAP).

Remediation activities included (1) vacuuming or wiping surface areas; (2) sanding, grinding, or scrubbing the areas, when necessary; (3) shoveling out sludge in six catch basins, high-pressure water cleaning of pipes from each catch basin,

and sandblasting walls; and (4) removing contaminated soil from the area outside the armory building and from the area between catch basins where a main pipe was removed.

Regulatory Setting

AEC, a predecessor agency to DOE, established FUSRAP in March 1974 to evaluate radioactive contamination at sites where work was performed to develop the nation's nuclear weapons and early atomic energy program. After reviewing records and radiological surveys for more than 600 sites connected with the nuclear weapons program, DOE identified 46 sites that required cleanup, including the Chicago North site. Congress transferred responsibility for FUSRAP site characterization and remediation to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1997. DOE retains responsibility for long-term surveillance and maintenance of remediated FUSRAP sites.

The Chicago North site was remediated to criteria in *Guidelines for Residual Radioactive Material at Formerly Utilized Sites Remedial Action Program and Remote Surplus Facilities Management Program Sites*. A notice of cleanup certification for the site was published in the *Federal Register* on February 17, 1989.

In fiscal year 2004, DOE transferred responsibility for the Chicago North site from the DOE Office of Environmental Management to the DOE Office of Legacy Management (LM).

Current Site Conditions

Post-remedial-action survey data indicate that the radiological condition of the Chicago North site is in compliance with applicable DOE standards and guidelines for cleanup of residual radioactive contamination. An independent verification survey conducted after the completion of remedial action detected no residual radioactivity at the site that exceeded current guidelines. Therefore, DOE released the site for unrestricted use in 1989.

Legacy Management Activities

No monitoring, maintenance, or site inspections are required for the Chicago North site. LM's responsibilities consist of managing site records and responding to stakeholder inquiries.

Contacts

In case of an emergency at the site, contact 911.

Documents related to FUSRAP activities at the Chicago North site are available on the LM website at http://www.lm.doe.gov/chicago_north/Sites.aspx.

For more information about LM's activities at the Chicago North site, contact:

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