

Gaithersburg Research Facility (MD-222) (W-94)
Gaithersburg, Maryland
Montgomery County

Site Description

The Gaithersburg Research Facility is surrounded by single-family residences and farmland. Structures on the site include three former missile launching pads and separate fueling, generator, assembly, storage, and wastewater disposal areas. As of 1993, the site was operated as the Army Reserve Center.

Site History

The Gaithersburg Research Facility was originally the Launch Area of the Gaithersburg Nike Launch and Control area (W-94), which was part of an air-defense missile system constructed in the continental United States between 1954 and the 1970s. The Launch Area contained the facilities and equipment required to assemble, test and maintain the missiles and associated launchers. The site generator building was equipped with a gravel pit sump where oil, solvents, and paints were routinely dumped and allowed to soak into the ground. The site was owned and operated by the Department of the Army from 1956 to 1962, at which time, it was transferred to the Department of the Navy. The site was transferred two more times, to Harry Diamond Laboratories in 1972, and then to Fort George G. Meade in 1979. In 1986, the site became the Army Reserve Center after operations were moved there from the Control Area.

Environmental Investigations

A Preliminary Assessment/Site Investigation (PA/SI) was conducted in 1990. Samples taken during that investigation were analyzed for volatile organic compounds (VOCs), semi-volatile organic compounds (SVOCs), and metals. Four monitoring wells were installed as part of the PA/SI. One well was installed in an upgradient location on the site, whereas the other three were installed downgradient of potential contamination sources. No VOCs, SVOCs or metals were detected above certified reporting limits in surface water, groundwater, or soil samples. No SVOCs were detected above certified reporting limits in soil samples. As of 1990, the site contained a 1,000-gallon underground storage tank that was not removed during any environmental investigation.

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