



Program Executive Office
Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives

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Assembled Chemical
Weapons Alternatives
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A Partnership for Safe
Chemical Weapons
Destruction



www.peoacwa.army.mil

Chemical Weapons Convention

The Chemical Weapons Convention, or CWC, is a multilateral arms control treaty which prohibits the production, stockpiling and use of chemical weapons.

As a State Party to the convention, the U.S. must destroy all the chemical weapons it owns or possesses; destroy all chemical weapons it may have abandoned in another country; and destroy facilities it owns or possesses which were involved in the production of chemical weapons. The treaty, which has been signed by 192 nations as of April 2016, is enforced by the [Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons](#), or OPCW, in The Hague, Netherlands.



The Program Executive Office, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives (PEO ACWA) is responsible for safely destroying the remaining U.S. chemical weapons stockpiles stored at U.S. Army installations near Pueblo, Colorado and Richmond, Kentucky. As such, PEO ACWA is unwavering in its commitment to achieving 100 percent destruction of its chemical weapons as soon as practicable, consistent with the CWC imperatives of public safety, environmental protection, and international transparency and oversight.

Under the CWC, States Parties have agreed to create a verification regime for certain toxic chemicals and their precursors in order to ensure that such chemicals are only used for purposes not prohibited. In addition, a unique feature of the CWC is its incorporation of the "challenge inspection," whereby any State Party in doubt about another State Party's compliance can request that the OPCW send an inspection team.

Background

The CWC entered into force on April 29, 1997. At that time, the U.S. and 86 other nations became the first countries to sign and ratify the CWC. Since entry into force of the CWC, the U.S. Army has destroyed more than 2.3 million munitions and more than 24,000 metric tons of chemical agent, representing nearly 90 percent of its chemical weapons stockpile. Other major CWC milestone accomplishments include the total destruction of U.S. unfilled munitions and binary projectile inventory, the complete destruction of the nation's former chemical weapons production facilities and the elimination of all binary chemical weapon materiel.

The CWC required participating countries to destroy 100 percent of their chemical weapons stockpiles within 10 years, or by April 29, 2007, for original signatories. The CWC also set intermediate stockpile destruction deadlines, including one percent destroyed by April 2000 and 20 percent by April 2002. The U.S. was granted an extension of the 45 percent milestone, extending it from April 2004 to December 2007. The nation then succeeded in meeting all three intermediate deadlines with an impressive safety and environmental record.

In April 2006, the U.S. was granted a five-year extension to the original 2007 deadline by the OPCW. When then Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld made the request to extend the deadline to April 2012 as allowed by the CWC, he acknowledged that because of many challenges, the U.S. would not be able to meet even the extended destruction deadline. He estimated at that time only 66 percent of the chemical weapons stockpile would be destroyed by the extended 2012 deadline.

However, the combination of additional destruction system processes to complement existing facilities, execution of risk mitigation efforts, application of lessons learned from previous destruction operations and the use of performance incentives has assisted acceleration efforts. The U.S. has significantly surpassed the 2006 estimate by destroying more weapons in less time than originally believed possible. PEO ACWA is continuously evaluating similar options for accelerating the process.

For more information on the CWC, visit www.opcw.org.