



Pueblo Chemical Agent-
Destruction Pilot Plant

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION
CONTACT:**

Pueblo Chemical
Stockpile
Outreach Office
104 West B Street
Pueblo, CO 81003
(719) 546-0400
PuebloOutreach@iem.com

Pueblo Chemical Agent-
Destruction Pilot Plant Public
Affairs
(719) 549-4959

U.S. Army
Pueblo Chemical Depot
Public Affairs Office
(719) 549-4135
usarmy.pueblo.usamc.mbx.
pcd-pao@mail.mil



**A Partnership for Safe
Chemical Weapons
Destruction**

www.peoacwa.army.mil



Neutralization Followed by Biotreatment

The Program Executive Office, Assembled Chemical Weapons Alternatives program, the U.S. Army Pueblo Chemical Depot and the surrounding community worked together to select neutralization followed by biotreatment to destroy the chemical weapons stored at the depot.

In September 2002, the Bechtel Pueblo Team was awarded a contract to design, construct, test, operate and close the facility that will utilize this technology: the Pueblo Chemical Agent-Destruction Pilot Plant (PCAPP). Neutralization followed by biotreatment uses hot water to neutralize the chemical agent, effectively destroying the mustard agent molecules. The resulting hydrolysate is mostly water and thiodiglycol, a common industrial chemical that is readily biodegradable. Ordinary sewage treatment bacteria, or microbes, consume the organics in the hydrolysate. Besides being a common phenomenon in nature, the science of using microbes to help dispose of hazardous waste has existed for decades. Sewage treatment facilities across the country use microbes every day to help break down raw sewage.

In addition, extensively trained, skilled workers and state-of-the-art robotic systems will ensure the safe destruction of Pueblo's chemical weapons stockpile.

Step One: Removing the Energetics

Robotic equipment will remove the weapon's energetic components, including the fuze and the burster. Removing these parts first makes the remaining processes safer. Once removed, the energetics will be disposed at an existing, off site permitted facility.

Step Two: Removing the Mustard Agent

Once the energetic components are removed, the weapon body containing chemical agent will be processed. To remove the agent, the body is robotically accessed, and then the agent is washed out with pressurized water.

Step Three: Neutralization of Mustard Agent

The mustard agent will be mixed with hot water and a caustic solution. The byproduct from this process is called hydrolysate. This process brings the pH to a neutral level, making the solution digestible by the microbes used in biotreatment, which is the next step.

Step Four: Biotreatment

The hydrolysate generated in step three will go through the biotreatment process, which consists of large tanks containing microbes that digest and further break down the solution. Water released from the process will be recycled, leaving various salts and biosludge. Biosludge, which is made up of microbe waste products and other bacterial matter, will be filtered to remove water and disposed at off site, permitted Treatment, Storage and Disposal Facilities (TSDF).

Step Five: Disposing of Metal Parts

The final step is treating the weapon's metal parts. Although the metal parts were cleansed of energetics and agent in step one and step two, they still may contain energetics and agent, and need to be decontaminated to a higher level. To reach this level of decontamination, the metal parts will be heated to 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 minutes. The metal can then be recycled.

PCAPP Explosive Destruction System

It is recognized that secondary wastes will also result from the processing of problematic munitions that are unable to go through the main destruction plant. These wastes, which will include both solid and liquid byproducts coming from [PCAPP's Explosive Destruction System](#) (EDS), will be stored in an approved less than 90-day hazardous waste storage area at the PCAPP EDS site, pending shipment to permitted TSDFs for further treatment and/or ultimate disposal.