



Maryland Department of the  
Environment

## FACTS ABOUT: DWYER PROPERTY

---

### **Site Location**

The Dwyer Property site is located north of the corner of Maryland Routes 545 and 279, in Elkton, Cecil County, Maryland. The approximate 72.86-acre property is located on the northwest side of Elkton, just within the city limits. Coordinates for the center of the site are approximately 39.6179 north latitude and 75.8442 west longitude.

### **Site History**

The property was agricultural prior to 1933. In 1933, the property was purchased by Triumph Fusee and Fireworks Company and used to produce “fusees,” a type of signal flare, and fireworks. In 1938, the company changed its name to Triumph Explosives, Inc. and production was geared to the manufacture of various munitions and trinitrotoluene-based explosives.

To satisfy growing demand for munitions during the early years of World War II, Triumph Explosives, Inc. changed the company name to Triumph Industries and expanded their operation to include the land located west of Blue Ball Road. Triumph Industries used the original property (the Dwyer Property site) to produce Army munitions, and the facilities west of Blue Ball Road to produce Naval munitions.

In 1942, the Department of the Navy assumed control of operations at Triumph Industries for six months. The Navy took over operations by executive order resulting from internal management problems in the company. Triumph Industries continued munitions production until the end of World War II.

In 1946, the Bowers Battery & Spark Plug Company purchased the site. This company used the land to manufacture carbon batteries. In 1948, the property was sold to Aerial Products, Inc., a fireworks and munitions manufacturer. Mr. Martin Dwyer was President of Aerial Products, Inc. throughout the life of the company, which ceased operations in 1958.

Mr. Dwyer purchased the property in 1958 and possibly used the property for the manufacture of incendiary flares until 1972. Mr. Dwyer transferred the property to several heirs in 1986. Since then, the property has become overgrown with vegetation. Unpermitted dumping of household waste has occurred in various portions of the property.

## **Environmental Investigations and Actions**

In March 1989, MDE completed a Preliminary Site Assessment of the property. The property came to the attention of MDE as a result of a real estate transaction. As part of that investigation, three groundwater monitoring wells were installed on the property. Results of the laboratory analysis of the groundwater samples indicated high concentrations of volatile organic contamination (VOC) in the parts per million range.

In December 1989, MDE completed a Screening Site Inspection (SSI) that reiterated the results of the Preliminary Assessment.

In September 1994, MDE completed an Expanded Site Inspection (ESI) of the Dwyer Property. Chemical analysis of aqueous samples indicated the presence of VOC and inorganic contaminants in the groundwater beneath the property and in Dogwood Run.

In January 2001, MDE completed an ESI that revealed the presence of high concentrations of chlorinated solvents in the upper part of the aquifer that indicated the presence of Dense Non-Aqueous Phase Liquid (DNAPL) on site.

In April 2002, MDE contracted ENSAT Corporation to manage an exploratory soil boring program as the initial phase of further characterization and potential remediation of the VOC contamination of the groundwater on site. Groundwater samples collected during boring advancement revealed elevated levels of VOCs.

In October 2005, Tetra Tech completed a Remedial Investigation/Feasibility Study (RI/FS) under contract with MDE. The RI identified two chlorinated solvent plumes, one along the northern border and a second plume located in the southwestern portion of the property that has migrated off site.

In 2006, MDE investigated off site migration of a VOC plume to the southwest under an open field and concluded it does not present a human health risk at this time.

Membrane Interface Probe investigations in 2007 identified a new hot spot area in a previously uninvestigated portion of the site and in 2008 TCE was identified in a groundwater sample at a concentration of 92%.

In January 2011, CGS (formerly ENSAT Corporation) submitted the draft Dwyer Property Expanded Remedial Investigation report.

On March 10, 2011, the Dwyer Property was listed on the National Priorities List (NPL) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) assumed oversight and management of the project.

In December 2011, EPA Emergency Response conducted a second subslab soil vapor investigation at the adjacent Rudy Park housing facility that did not identify indoor air threats.

### **Current Status**

EPA is currently developing a RI/FS to address VOC contamination of the groundwater.