



Maryland Department of the  
Environment

## **FACTS ABOUT: GENERAL ELECTRIC COMPANY SITE**

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### **Site Location**

The General Electric Site is located in Howard County on the site of a former sand and gravel quarry. The former Appliance Park East manufacturing facility was constructed in 1969 and 1970 on 1,125 acres of land purchased by GE from Howard Research and Development (HRD).

### **Site History**

The General Electric (GE) Company owned and operated the facility as a large appliance manufacturing plant from 1971 through 1991. The General Electric Company generated and disposed of wastes on site.

The main areas of waste generation were the enameling process, the painting process, and the nickel plating process. In 1973, the API separator in their Industrial Wastewater Treatment Plant (IWTP) became filled with paint sludge. The API separator was cleaned and the resulting sludge was placed into what is now known as the 3 API ponds. This was the only time waste was disposed of in these ponds.

The old IWTP was built in 1972 and received metal finishing sludges, paint sludges, and enamel wastes, known as frits, from 1974 until 1979. During 1974, the new IWTP site was brought into service and received metal finishing sludges from 1979 until November 1982. The waste sludges were disposed of in two sludge lagoons located to the south of the IWTP. Since 1982, all wastes generated at this facility have been transported off site and are disposed of in an approved facility.

### **Environmental Investigation and Action**

Samples taken from the old and new sludge ponds, as well as the 3 API ponds, revealed notable concentrations of metals generally found in paint and nickel plating sludges. These metals include nickel, chromium, lead, zinc, and boron. Groundwater beneath the GE site revealed a similar pattern of contamination; concentrations of chromium, lead and arsenic reported in the monitoring wells were sufficiently high to possibly preclude its future potable use. A notable concentration of methylene chloride was also measured in the groundwater. MDE recommended that GE begin closure of all waste management units and that corrective action be implemented on the site.



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EPA oversaw the Corrective Action of the facility beginning in 1991. The initial requirements for the corrective action process were specified in a RCRA permit issued by EPA to GE in February 1991 (MDD046279311). By letter dated June 30, 2000, EPA determined that the existing Permit would remain fully effective and enforceable until a new Corrective Action Permit was issued by EPA. The EPA Permit currently governs corrective action at the Facility. Numerous investigations and actions have been completed and various reports have been submitted to the EPA since 1991.

## **Current Status**

In 1983, GE submitted a closure plan to the state of Maryland's, Waste Management Administration. This closure plan involved mixing the sludge with calcium carbonate to raise the pH of the waste and reduce the solubility of various inorganics, most notably nickel. This effort was to be followed by the placing of a clay cap on the site, the covering of the site with top soil, and the seeding of the site to help stabilize the waste disposal areas.

GE continued manufacturing operations at the Facility until June 1990, at which time all manufacturing equipment, above-grade storage containers and surface wastes were removed and/or decommissioned. On December 28, 1990, the decommissioned Facility, with the exception of the property containing the three closed landfills was sold back to HRD. HRD put much of the Facility back into productive use. Three public roads: Robert Fulton Drive; Snowden Square Drive; and, Solar Walk have been constructed on the Facility.

The entire length of the Facility along Snowden River Parkway has been developed into a shopping plaza known as Snowden Square, and subdivided for sale to the various merchants. This area now includes retail stores, restaurants, a gas station and a movie theater. The western- and southwestern-most portions of the Facility have been re-developed into townhomes, condominiums, and office space.



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