



JARS OF EXPLOSIVE ACID SHUT DOWN ROAD NEAR BELLINGHAM AIRPORT

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Two jars of an explosive acid shut down a stretch of road Thursday afternoon, Sept. 3, near the Bellingham International Airport.

Staff from Northwest Indian College brought about two quarts of picric acid -- about the size of large spaghetti sauce jars -- to the county's toxic waste disposal facility, 3505 Airport Drive, after the acid dried out and needed to be thrown away, said Lt. Bob Vander Yacht.

Dried picric acid isn't accepted at the facility because it's explosive. In the 1800s the acid was widely used in explosives and munitions. Historically it has also been used for dyes and burn treatment.

The acid often gets stored in jars with water. Once it dries out it becomes dangerous and explosive, said Vander Yacht, who works on the Bellingham Police Department's bomb squad.

The city's bomb squad was called in around 1 p.m. to ensure the acid was disposed of safely. Police consulted with experts, then arranged to take the acid to a remote spot on airport property to burn it, Vander Yacht said.

Meanwhile about two blocks of Airport Drive were shut down near the toxic waste facility. The closure was expected to last until at least 6 p.m. Traffic still could get to and from the airport via

Williamson or Airport Way.

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