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## Construction resumes on Hanford Vit Plant's High-Level Waste and Pretreatment Facilities

**Contact:** Drew Slaton, Bechtel National, Inc. Vit Plant Communications Manager  
(509) 371-2203, (509)554-1922, [dpslaton@bechtel.com](mailto:dpslaton@bechtel.com)

**Richland, Wash.** -- Full construction has resumed on the Hanford Vitrification Plant's High-Level Waste Vitrification (HLW) and Pretreatment (PT) facilities after nearly two years of construction curtailment.

Heavy construction activities such as concrete and structural steel placements will begin immediately in the HLW facility, while work in the PT facility will ramp up to heavy construction activities later in the fall.

Nearly 1,300 people are now working at the construction site in Hanford's 200 east area, including more than 600 union craft workers, 400 field non-manual staff, and 200 subcontractors.

In November 2005, the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) suspended construction on the HLW and PT facilities to validate the design using more stringent seismic criteria. On August 10, 2007, the Secretary of Energy certificated the final seismic ground motion criteria based on the results of data collected and analyzed from the drilling of deep boreholes at the construction site. Certification of the final criteria cleared the way to resume HLW and PT construction.

The HLW is one of five major components of the Vit Plant. The facility will treat the most radioactive liquid wastes from Hanford's underground storage tanks by immobilizing it in a sturdy glass matrix. During operations, the HLW will produce 6.6 tons of glass daily. The HLW facility is currently 17 percent complete, and will be two football fields wide, one football field long and six stories tall when complete. The facility is scheduled to be completed in 2016, when it will be tested using water and waste simulants in preparation for "hot" operations in 2019.

"The vitrification plant is the cornerstone of Hanford tank waste cleanup," said DOE Office of River Protection Acting Manager Shirley Olinger. "When complete and operational it will immobilize in glass some of the most complex radioactive and chemical wastes in the world; the legacy of nearly 50 years of plutonium production."

Near-term HLW construction will focus on installing structural steel, rebar and concrete formwork for placing concrete floors and walls. The building requires 9,600 tons of structural steel and 88,000 cubic yards of concrete.

"We are pleased to have received the green light to resume full construction on the Vit Plant," said Project Director Bill Elkins. "We look forward to making substantial construction progress on all facilities this year."



# NEWS

Bechtel National, Inc.  
2435 Stevens Center Place  
Richland, WA 99352

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Construction of the Vit Plant began in 2002 with large placements of concrete and structural steel. The Vit Plant will be an industrial complex of facilities for separating and vitrifying (immobilizing in glass) millions of gallons of radioactive and chemical wastes stored at the Hanford Site. The five major components of the WTP will be the Pretreatment Facility for separating the waste, the High-Level Waste Vitrification and Low-Activity Waste Vitrification facilities where the waste will be immobilized in glass, the Analytical Laboratory for testing physical and chemical properties of the waste at different stages to ensure the quality of the glass, and the Balance of Facilities which will comprise over 20 various support facilities. Once complete, the Vit Plant will be the largest and most capable facility of its kind in the world. For more information and construction site photos, visit [www.waste2glass.com](http://www.waste2glass.com).

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