

# DOE NEWS

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**HANFORD WORKERS BEAT ANOTHER CLEANUP MILESTONE  
Additional milestone for retrieving buried waste finished a month early**

Workers at the Department of Energy's (DOE) Hanford Site in Washington State have now retrieved more than 22,600 drums worth of waste generated from producing plutonium in the 1970s and 1980s—meeting a Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) milestone due December 31, 2006.

“This is tough work, but we’ve completed all four of our waste retrieval milestones early,” said Keith A. Klein, manager of DOE’s Richland Operations Office. “Workers’ innovation in the field, even as they had to deal with more and more corroded containers, has been key to that success.”

Last week, DOE announced that workers had met a TPA milestone for emptying a 600-foot-long trench that contained deteriorating drums and large metal boxes of retrievably stored waste. Waste was retrieved from that trench and others in the 200 West Area of central Hanford to meet the milestone being announced today.

The waste is in the form of contaminated debris, tools, clothing, and other materials generated in the 1970s and 1980s. The waste containers were stacked on asphalt pads, covered with plywood, draped with tarps, and then covered with dirt. Once the drums are retrieved, workers determine the type of waste they contain and where they will be disposed. If the container has low-level waste, they can be disposed of in a lined, permitted facility on the Hanford Site; if the

contents are transuranic waste, the container is prepared for shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) in New Mexico. Hanford has sent the equivalent of more than 9,200 drums of waste to WIPP so far.

"We have removed nearly one third of the waste from these burial trenches," said Dale McKenney, Fluor Hanford's vice president of Waste Stabilization and Disposition. "When we started the work in October 2003, we anticipated the majority of the waste containers would be in good shape. As we're doing the work, we're encountering more and more badly corroded drums that require special handling. The problem-solving attitude and safe approach of our employees has helped us meet our cleanup commitments while protecting our people and the environment."

"Retrieval and appropriate disposal of waste from the Hanford burial grounds is a critical step in cleanup of the Central Plateau," said Nick Ceto, the Environmental Protection Agency's Hanford Project Manager. "This work contributes to both shrinking the footprint of waste sites and protecting groundwater resources at the Hanford Site."

DOE is on track to remove up to an estimated 15,000 cubic meters (equivalent to approximately 75,000 drums) of radioactive waste from several burial trenches in the 200 West and 200 East Areas of Hanford by the end of 2010 as required by the TPA.

Next year's TPA milestone calls for retrieving 7,200 cubic meters of waste from Hanford's burial trenches by December 31, 2007.

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