



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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HANFORD WORKERS BEAT ANOTHER CLEANUP MILESTONE

*Workers retrieve radioactive, solid waste from trenches ahead
of schedule for the fifth year in a row*

The U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Hanford Site Wednesday met a Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) milestone for retrieving 9,700 cubic meters (equivalent to 46,600 drums) of radioactive, solid waste more than three months ahead of schedule.

Workers at the site in southeast Washington State achieved this cleanup milestone, originally due to be completed by December 31, 2008, as they continue to retrieve 15,000 cubic meters (equivalent to more than 70,000 drums) of radioactive waste that was generated from producing plutonium in the 1970s and 1980s. This is the fifth year in a row DOE and contractor Fluor Hanford have met annual TPA milestones for retrieving waste early.

“This important cleanup work moves waste out of temporary storage and into treatment and disposal facilities,” said Matt McCormick, U.S. Department of Energy assistant manager for the Central Plateau. “To date, workers have safely retrieved two-thirds of the solid radioactive waste covered by the cleanup milestones.”

About half of the material retrieved is transuranic waste that is being shipped to DOE's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant near Carlsbad, N.M., for permanent disposal, and the other half is disposed of in a regulated facility at Hanford, the Environmental Restoration Disposal Facility.

“This project has been very challenging, with difficult field conditions due to heat and wind and degraded waste containers, and yet we have had great success in meeting milestone commitments for this work,” said Dale McKenney, vice president of Waste Stabilization & Disposition, Fluor Hanford. “Our workers are highly skilled, they adapt to changing conditions, and they continue to meet and beat our commitments while working safely.”

The material removed to meet the milestone announced today was taken out of trenches in the 200 West Area in the central portion of Hanford. The waste includes contaminated debris, tools, clothing, and other materials generated in the 1970s and 1980s. The solid waste was put in 55-gallon drums and boxes that were placed in trenches and covered with soil.

Next year's TPA milestone calls for retrieving a cumulative total of 12,200 cubic meters (equivalent to 58,700 drums) of waste from Hanford's trenches by December 31, 2009. The final milestone in this work calls for retrieving an estimated 15,000 cubic meters (equivalent to more than 70,000 drums) of radioactive waste from trenches in the 200 West and 200 East Areas of Hanford by the end of 2010.

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