



DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY HANFORD

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RICHLAND
OPERATIONS OFFICE
United States Department of Energy

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Demolition of One of Hanford's Most Hazardous Facilities Underway

Safe work the focus as crews demolish the "Last Stop of Plutonium Production" at Hanford

RICHLAND, Wash. – Demolition is underway at the Plutonium Finishing Plant (PFP), one of the most hazardous buildings on the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state. The safe and compliant demolition of the facility will benefit the Hanford Site, its employees and the community.

“Starting demolition of the Plutonium Finishing Plant is a historic step in the Hanford cleanup process,” said Doug Shoop, Manager of the Department of Energy’s (DOE) Richland Operations Office. “The years of preparation and the safe and methodical demolition of the plant will greatly reduce a significant hazard on the Hanford site. I’m very proud of Hanford workers, who are doing the region and the nation a great service by working safely in hazardous conditions.”

DOE and contractor CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M) are demolishing the plant's Plutonium Reclamation Facility (PRF), the first of four main buildings to be demolished. Approximately four months later, demolition will proceed to the plant's Americium Recover Facility (also known as the McCluskey Room), then to the main processing facility and the plant's fan house and ventilation stack.

Since plant operations ceased in 1989, the U.S. Department of Energy has focused on preparing the facility for demolition by removing radiological and chemical hazards from the building. Most recently, this involved performing some of the most hazardous work across the Department of Energy complex, with employees of contractor CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M) [cutting apart highly-contaminated glove boxes](#) and removing them from the building, piece by piece. Other highly-hazardous work included [cleaning out the historic McCluskey Room](#). Work continues preparing the main processing facility for demolition; work inside should wrap up in the coming months to allow demolition of that facility to begin in early 2017.

“Our employees have done a tremendous job preparing this historic facility for demolition,” said John Ciucci, CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company President and Chief Executive Officer. “As we begin demolition, our goal remains to continue our high standard of safely executing of work at hand. We have the highly skilled demolition workers who have demolished many facilities, and they are ready to safely and compliantly demolish PFP.”

Internal hazard removal and mitigation is one component of ensuring a safe and compliant demolition. CH2M is also using extensive dust suppression and air monitoring, control of access to the area, and use of structural engineering expertise to demolish the plant as safely as possible.

The Plutonium Finishing Plant operated for 40 years, starting in 1949. It was also known as “Z-Plant” due to the fact that no further Hanford activity related to plutonium production would be done after the plutonium was processed there. Crews at the plant processed plutonium nitrate solutions, created from dissolved fuel rods irradiated at Hanford reactors, and made solid, hockey-puck sized plutonium “buttons” and plutonium oxide powder which could then be shipped to the country’s weapons production facilities. The work left much of the facility contaminated with hazardous radioactive and chemical materials.

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The Department of Energy’s Richland Operations Office (DOE-RL) manages the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington. Along with the DOE Office of River Protection (ORP), DOE-RL is responsible for the federal government’s cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of plutonium production at Hanford for the nation’s defense. Except for the tank waste mission managed by ORP, DOE-RL is responsible for cleanup of all remaining Hanford waste streams and is currently focused on cleaning out and demolishing the high-hazard Plutonium Finishing Plant, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and solid waste, treating contaminated groundwater, moving radioactive sludge out of the K West Basin and away from the Columbia River, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future. The office oversees Hanford Site work that is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 4,200 personnel. Visit www.hanford.gov.

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