

Warehouse Operations gears up for faster pace

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Cleanup, deactivation and decommissioning activities continue to accelerate as the Hanford Site gains on closure. The Warehouse Operations group is keeping pace by streamlining services to the entire site.

Essential service

Warehouse workers serve an important, often overlooked, role in assisting Hanford Site projects in achieving their missions. They are the first and last to interact with the world beyond Hanford. Warehouse staff members receive, inspect, track, store, deliver and maintain supplies, tools, spare parts and equipment arriving on site. Shipments leaving Hanford also pass through the warehouse for inspections and related activities.

Fluor Hanford's Business Systems organization formed Supply Chain Operations and Support last April, and it includes Warehouse Operations. "We provide cradle-to-grave support to the projects," said Rich Meyer, supply chain director. "The warehouse staff is essential. As cleanup accelerates and we perform more D&D work, the supply chain and the warehouse can be heavily affected, and it is critical to the success of our projects to include our organization in your planning process."

As an example, Meyer discussed shipments of transuranic waste going from Hanford to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico. Some waste being shipped from Hanford to WIPP has to first be repackaged into new waste drums. Last year, shipments left about every other month and it was easy to keep enough new, empty drums on hand to meet demand. Now, the Waste Management Project is targeting eight shipments per month, and anticipating an even faster pace in the future.

The project requires more new, empty drums and warehouse storage space. Manufacturers often have one production run per month, so several semi-trucks full of drums could arrive at the warehouse at once. Warehouse Operations has to address questions such as: What can be done to ensure the project has the drums it needs, when needed, and avoid peaks of new drum arrivals?

To maintain solid project support, interactions with vendors are planned to discuss demands for various types of supplies and how to achieve steady delivery rates. In addition, inventories are being "right-sized."



Warehouse Operations assists with logistics for pre-departure inspections of transuranic waste shipments leaving Hanford for permanent disposal at WIPP in New Mexico. Inspections are independently conducted by the Oregon Department of Transportation Motor Carrier Enforcement, Washington State Patrol Commercial Vehicle Enforcement, and Washington State Department of Health Division of Radiological Protection.

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Right-sizing inventory

Right-sizing stock in inventory makes better use of warehouse space. Multitudes of tools, supplies, materials, spare parts and backup equipment have been purchased since the 1940s. Much of the inventory was for Hanford's former operations. Many of these operations have now ceased, so the back-up equipment and supplies are no longer required.

Supply Chain Operations and Support first searches inside Hanford to find new users for inventory. If there is no current site need, the items are made available to other Department of Energy sites. If there are no takers within DOE, the materials and supplies are contributed to local economic development through the Tri-Cities Asset Reinvestment Company. TARC was formed by the Tri-City Industrial Development Council in 1999 to work with DOE in transferring excess Hanford Site assets to the private sector, with the hope of creating jobs and generating revenue for local economic development.

Storage

Items traditionally warehoused are being reviewed. The Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, for instance, had accumulated drilling core samples since 1942, maintaining and monitoring them, as required. The samples — jars filled with soil — took up 6,000 square feet of warehouse space. Fluor Hanford worked with PNNL to find other storage, Warehouse Operations moved the samples, and the Fluor Hanford-operated warehouse is now being used for current activities.

Lessons learned

Supply Chain Operations and Support is also incorporating lessons learned from other DOE sites into the business side of faster cleanup and D&D. Meyer said Rocky Flats reported unanticipated increases in the purchase of saw blades, jumpers, safety masks, shoes, glasses, and similar common industrial items. At Fernald, disposal of wooden pallets and tires was challenging because of modern disposal limitations. Another site took down its simple, non-contaminated warehouse early to practice D&D, forcing it to later rent warehouses. It advised other DOE sites to raze warehouses at the end of closure.

“We are attempting to plan ahead so we can be pro-active regarding the challenges of faster cleanup and D&D,” Meyer said. ■