

REACH

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Team safely removes 300 Area fuel bunker

George Rangel, BHI

The four-month project to demolish and remove a Hanford Site 300 Area fuel bunker that once supplied diesel for the 384 Powerhouse will be completed this month by DynCorp Tri-Cities Services and Bechtel Hanford.

DynCorp hired Bechtel to demolish the 209-foot-long, 26-foot-wide, 12-foot-deep structure and remediate the contaminated soil surrounding the bunker.

The 450,000-gallon reinforced concrete diesel-fuel storage bunker was shut down along with its powerhouse on March 21, 1998. The 54-year-old powerhouse once supplied steam for the entire 300 Area.

Several obstacles were overcome by the Environmental Restoration Contractor team in bringing the task to completion, said Vern Rice, Bechtel's site superintendent for the project. "There was some asbestos around the piping," Rice said. "Diesel contaminated some of the surrounding soil. It leaked through the concrete storage tank and stained the concrete."

The storage tank's first foot of concrete was visible while the rest was buried 11 feet



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In late June, a three-man team tested a 300 Area diesel fuel bunker and surrounding soil for contaminants. When sampling is complete, the ERC team will remove the 1940s-era fuel tank east of the 384 Powerhouse.

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underground. The bunker had four compartments. Two of the compartments had a 72,000-gallon capacity, and two others each held 150,000 gallons.

Sampling, surveying

The ERC team's first step was to excavate a 14-foot-by-8-foot trench around the bunker and stockpile the soil. The trench allowed a trio of workers to perform radiological-release surveys of the bunker's external wall and take soil samples before demolition began.

Two workers were suspended above the bunker in a hoist-lift basket. The decommissioning and demolition technician operated the hoist-lift while a radcon technician performed the radiation-release testing with a soil probe. The third worker on the ground, also a radcon technician, recorded the results called out by the first technician.

"The measurement-and-probe method made it possible to pinpoint where the radiological contamination was located, so we could separate potentially radiological contaminated demolition debris," Rice said. "It also saved time because the three-person team worked more efficiently together than a single employee working alone."

Radiological contamination was found in the bunker's northeast corner in June. As a result, the crews changed their surveying methods to meet radiological contamination testing requirements. The disposal site for remediated soil will depend on the amount of radiological contamination found.

"Our first concern is safety, then we deal with other efficiency measures," said Mike Mihalic, the Bechtel project manager. "We don't want to put anyone in harm's way. Good construction management techniques ensure effective safety measures to get the job done right."

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Currently, the concrete structure is being broken into football-size pieces and removed.

The bunker concrete that can be released based on the survey data will be transported to an on-site disposal facility by DynCorp. The company will manage the contaminated soil and concrete in accordance with Washington State Department of Ecology and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency regulations. ♦