

TRU program recertification review to begin

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Fluor Hanford's Waste Management Project will soon complete its first year of transuranic waste shipments to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant outside Carlsbad, N.M. Seven loads containing a total of 257 drums have been shipped to WIPP, and the most recent load left the site on April 26.

These wastes are gone from Hanford forever, to be placed more than 2,100 feet below the New Mexico desert in deep, protective salt formations.

All Hanford transuranic materials must meet a stringent preparation protocol before going to the disposal site. Within the Waste Management Project, TRU Waste Program personnel put in a great deal of effort in preparing for certification from 1998 to 2000. The Fluor Hanford development of a site-wide TRU program and the attainment of certification were accomplished faster and cheaper here than at any other Department of Energy site.

With the end of the first year of shipments, it's time for the Fluor Hanford TRU Waste Program to be recertified. In this review process, the waste handling, characterization and packaging procedures must show compliance with the current WIPP rules. For example, the number of batch samples for drum gas analysis has been reduced, so Fluor Hanford has adjusted its procedures to accommodate the new data requirements.

Waste Management Project personnel have added two new Plutonium Finishing Plant characterization activities into the overall site TRU program. These activities are visual examination techniques during packaging and non-destructive assay at PFP. The activities are difficult to perform on some PFP transuranic wastes using the standard methods due to the restrictive type of waste container required for shipment, and therefore must be performed at the time of packaging.

The review team will include personnel from the DOE Carlsbad Area Office, the New Mexico Environment Department and the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as contractor experts at the WIPP facility. They will be at Hanford in mid-June for their review.

There are additional June, July and August shipments of TRU waste planned this year. The Fluor Hanford Waste Management Project is charged with preparing approximately 80,000 drums of Hanford transuranic waste to go to WIPP as part of the site cleanup. The shipments are planned over the next three decades. ♦