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## **WORKERS REMOVE MOST CONTAMINATED PROCESSING EQUIPMENT FROM HANFORD PLUTONIUM FINISHING PLANT**

*Removal of equipment is key step toward starting demolition of facility in 2016*

**RICHLAND, Wash.** – Workers have finished cutting up and removing the two most highly contaminated pieces of processing equipment, called glove boxes, from the Plutonium Finishing Plant at the Hanford Site in Washington state.

Workers began removing the glove boxes in June 2015. They finished removal of the first in August, and completed removal of the second glove box this month. The two large glove boxes were about two stories tall and were heavily contaminated with radiological hazards.

“Removing the glove boxes brings the Department of Energy and our contractor a significant step closer to being ready to start demolishing the plant,” said Tom Teynor, project director for the Department of Energy’s Richland Operations Office. “This was some of the most hazardous work performed at the site and right up there with the most hazardous work performed at any of the DOE nuclear weapons production sites.”

These were the most contaminated of the nearly 240 pieces of plutonium processing equipment at the plant that have been removed, or have been prepared to remove, during demolition preparation, according to Teynor.

The two recently removed glove boxes were too large and too contaminated to remove from the building in one piece. Workers cut apart the glove boxes into pieces that have since been packaged for eventual permanent disposal. Thirteen smaller glove boxes are packaged and staged for removal from the main facility immediately before and during demolition, which is expected to start later this year.

“This is challenging work, and we’ve shown we can do it safely,” said Craig Krueger, a nuclear chemical operator with CH2M HILL Plateau Remediation Company (CH2M) and member of the team that removed the two highly contaminated glove boxes. “I am proud of the work we’ve accomplished. This is work that hasn’t ever been done before at Hanford.”

Two high-hazard tasks continue elsewhere at the Plutonium Finishing Plant: preparing chemical tanks for removal and decontaminating a canyon – a long, tall concrete room – where plutonium was separated from plutonium-bearing waste.

[Watch](#) a time lapse showing crews removing the most hazardous glove box at PFP.  
[View](#) a photo gallery of crews removing the glove box.

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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. DOE-RL is also responsible for working with the National Park Service to implement and manage Hanford's portion of the new Manhattan Project National Historical Park, authorized by Congress in 2014. The office oversees Hanford Site work that is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 4,200 personnel. Visit [www.hanford.gov](http://www.hanford.gov).*

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