

At Hanford's Central Waste Complex, chemical and radioactive waste is stored until it can be treated, repackaged and disposed of.



The U.S. Department of Energy and contractor Central Plateau Cleanup Company are safely and compliantly managing radioactive and hazardous waste stored at the Central Waste Complex at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state.

Background

The Central Waste Complex (CWC) is a radioactive- and hazardous-waste storage facility located on the Hanford Site's Central Plateau. The CWC has approximately 300,000 square feet of storage space — the equivalent of six football fields — and stores approximately 11,000 waste containers that are mostly 55-gallon drums in buildings and outdoor storage areas.

The waste at CWC is mixed low-level waste, transuranic and transuranic mixed waste. Mixed waste contains both chemical and radioactive constituents. Transuranic waste consists of tools, rags, protective clothing, sludges, soil and other materials contaminated with radioactive elements, mostly plutonium, and it requires disposal in a geologic repository. The wastes come from on-site sources, such as projects to retrieve waste from burial grounds and deactivation and decommissioning work. Some waste originated from off-site sources, such as the Rocky Flats site in Colorado.

Mission

The CWC stores chemical and radioactive waste until it can be shipped for treatment and/or disposal. Mixed low-level waste will be disposed of at an on-site permitted landfill and transuranic waste will be shipped to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant in New Mexico beginning in 2028. The CWC facilities can be viewed using the self-guided [Hanford Virtual Tour](#).



Workers at a Central Waste Complex outside storage area load a container of waste for shipment to a local waste management facility for repackaging.



Waste boxes in storage at the Central Waste Complex after repackaging at a local waste management facility.



Transuranic waste being loaded into a special monitor to determine its radioactivity content.

