

**Changes to the Tri-Party Agreement for
Retrieving, Treating and Disposing of
Hanford Site Waste**

Fact Sheet



Comment Period

April 26 – June 14 23, 2021

Administrative Record

<https://go.usa.gov/xsykj>

Virtual Public Meeting

May 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. PT

Meeting Registration:

<https://bit.ly/3wCPzaj>

Webinar ID: 290-913-427

**Send comments by
June 14 23, 2021 to:**

M-091@rl.gov



Questions?

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The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), Washington State Department of Ecology (Ecology) and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) — the Tri-Party Agreement (TPA) agencies — recently completed negotiations on a series of milestones for managing radioactive solid waste located on Hanford's Central Plateau and are proposing changes to the TPA. The TPA agencies want your input on the proposed changes.

Background

The 580-square-mile Hanford Site in southeastern Washington state was created in 1943 as part of the Manhattan Project to produce plutonium for the nation's defense program. Today, waste management and environmental cleanup, including protection of the Columbia River, are Hanford's primary missions.

Summary of Proposed Changes

The TPA agencies are proposing changes to TPA milestones for retrieving, treating and disposing of certain types of waste at Hanford.

- *Why are these changes being made?*
The current schedule for the work is not feasible. The changes will establish an achievable schedule.
- *What is the main change to the milestones?*
The end date for disposing of all of the waste is being extended from a date in the TPA of "to be determined" to 2050.
- *What would the change in milestones mean for Hanford?*
The responsibility to manage this waste safely remains. The proposed schedule includes due dates between now and 2050 for treating and disposing of waste at Hanford or storing a certain type of waste for later shipment to the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) near Carlsbad, New Mexico.



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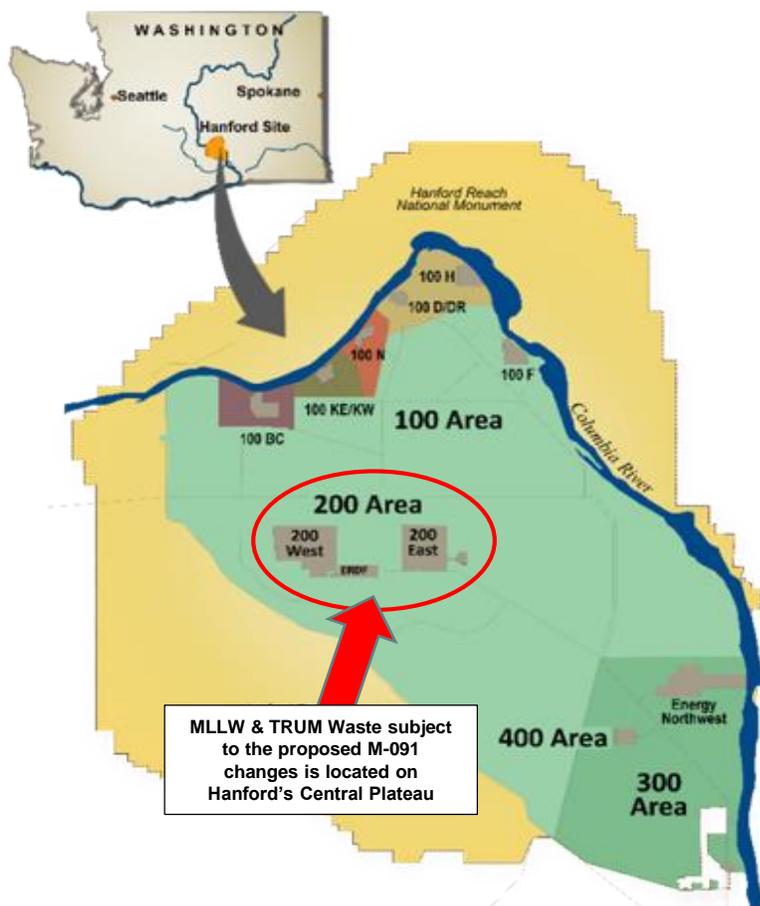
The *Hanford Federal Facility Agreement and Consent Order* (also known as the Tri-Party Agreement or TPA), is a legal agreement between DOE, Ecology and EPA that identifies cleanup actions and schedules, called milestones. Changes can be made to the TPA with the approval of the three agencies. Recently completed negotiations resulted in a set of proposed changes to the M-091 series of TPA milestones that include a commitment to restart shipments of Hanford's transuranic mixed waste (TRUM) by 2028 to WIPP, for disposal and an achievable schedule for retrieving, characterizing, and disposing of Hanford's mixed low-level waste (MLLW) and TRUM waste.

The proposed changes to the TPA are a joint proposal by the TPA agencies that establish an achievable schedule for safely managing and disposing of MLLW and TRUM waste. Under the proposal, 99% of the TRUM waste would be shipped to the WIPP by 2040. A few large containers would be dealt with between 2040 and 2050. Waste to be shipped after 2040 also includes a small number of remote-handled (RH) containers that would benefit from 20 years of radioactive decay.

What are MLLW and TRUM wastes?

MLLW is radioactive waste that contains a hazardous (e.g., chemical) component and is disposed of on the Hanford Site. The hazardous components of mixed wastes are subject to federal Resource Conservation and Recovery Act or Washington State Dangerous Waste regulations. TRUM refers to radioactive waste contaminated with artificially made elements above uranium on the periodic table (e.g., plutonium, americium) and hazardous components. (See definitions for MLLW and TRUM on page 5.)

Workers will retrieve approximately 17,500 containers of waste stored underground in Hanford's Low-Level Burial Grounds to determine if they contain MLLW or TRUM. The containers, along with approximately 11,000 containers that have already been retrieved and are stored aboveground in the Solid Waste Operations Complex, will be examined, characterized and treated, if necessary, to ensure they meet requirements for disposal.



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The TPA changes propose the following:

- The due date of Sept. 30, 2050, for TPA milestone M-091-00 to complete treatment of MLLW to land disposal restrictions standards and complete certification and shipment of TRUM waste to WIPP.
- TRUM certification and MLLW treatment: Work on seven new milestones continues progress toward removing large boxes stored outside the Central Waste Complex in Outside Storage Areas A and B. The two outside storage areas will be emptied of mixed waste when the new milestones are completed.

Milestone	Description	Due Date
NEW: M-091-53A	Remove 10 additional mixed-waste containers from Outside Storage Area A and/or Outside Storage Area B.	11/30/2021
NEW: M-091-53B	NEW: Remove 10 additional mixed-waste containers Outside Storage Area A and/or Outside Storage Area B.	11/30/2022
NEW: M-091-53C	NEW: Remove 10 additional mixed-waste containers Outside Storage Area A and/or Outside Storage Area B.	11/30/2023
NEW: M-091-53D	NEW: Remove 10 additional mixed-waste containers Outside Storage Area A and/or Outside Storage Area B.	11/30/2024
NEW: M-091-53E	Remove 10 additional mixed-waste containers from Outside Storage Area A and/or Outside Storage Area B.	11/30/2025
NEW: M-091-57	Initiate contact-handled (CH) certification activities by processing a TRUM container with results meeting the M-091-00 definition of "Certification."	9/30/2026
M-091-59 (previously a target M-091-52-T04)	Remove all mixed-waste containers from Outside Storage Areas A and B.	NEW DATE: 9/30/2026

Two additional target milestones ensure DOE moves the boxes stored outdoors and repackages a certain amount of waste each year. These same types of milestones have been used for the past four years. When the second of these two additional target milestones is completed, DOE will propose two more target milestones for the following two years.

Milestone	Description	Due Date
NEW: M-091-47-T01	Certify or treat 280 cubic meters of TRUM waste and MLLW. DOE achieves credit towards this volumetric requirement through some combination of 1) certification of small- or large-container TRUM waste or 2) treatment and disposal of MLLW from small or large containers. Certification of TRUM waste and MLLW and/or treatment and disposal of MLLW in excess of the volumetric requirement of previous M-091-47 series target dates can be credited towards future M-091-47 series target dates.	9/30/2021
NEW: M-091-47-T02	Certify or treat 280 cubic meters of TRUM waste and MLLW subsequent to completing certification or treatment of the volume required by M-091-47-T01.	9/30/2022



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Shipment of TRUM waste to WIPP: Annual shipping schedules would be included in a plan revised annually. Proposed changes in milestones would require the establishment of a schedule for WIPP shipments, require the first shipment in 2028, and create a new milestone for completing shipments of TRUM waste in 2050.

Milestone	Description	Due Date
NEW ADDITION (bold text): M-091-03	Submit a revision of the Hanford Site TRUM waste and MLLW Project Management Plan to Ecology. The revision will establish an appendix to include a schedule for retrieving retrievably stored waste (RSW), and for certifying and shipping CH waste to WIPP, including at least one measurable action to be taken by DOE to acquire capabilities to manage such wastes. Additionally, the schedule should identify annual shipping volumes.	Annually by June 30
NEW: M-091-60	Initiate treatment to land disposal restrictions (LDR) treatment standards for MLLW and TRUM waste (in aboveground storage as of June 30, 2009). DOE may choose to initiate certification and shipment of TRUM waste for disposal at WIPP in lieu of LDR treatment if, as of the time of shipment, such waste is exempt from LDR treatment standards when disposed of at WIPP.	9/30/2028
NEW: M-091-61	Complete treatment to LDR treatment standards for CH small containers of TRUM waste (in above ground storage as of June 30, 2009). DOE may choose to initiate certification and shipment of TRUM waste for disposal at WIPP in lieu of LDR treatment if, as of the time of shipment, such waste is exempt from LDR treatment standards when disposed at WIPP.	9/30/2040
NEW: M-091-62	Complete treatment to LDR treatment standards for CH large containers of TRUM waste (in above ground storage as of June 30, 2009). DOE may choose to initiate certification and shipment of TRUM waste for disposal at WIPP in lieu of LDR treatment if, as of the time of shipment, such waste is exempt from LDR treatment standards when disposed at WIPP.	9/30/2045
M-091-48	Complete the offsite shipment of all TRUM waste (in aboveground storage as of June 30, 2009, and in retrievable storage).	OLD DATE: 9/30/2030 NEW DATE: 9/30/2050

Retrieval of retrievably stored waste: the first milestone for this work is a proposal to resume the retrieval of waste. The date to complete retrievals would be moved out to 2048.

Milestone	Description	Due Date
M-091-49	Complete the retrieval and designation of CH RSW in burial grounds 218-W-4B, 218-W-3A and 218-E-12B.	OLD DATE: 09/30/2028 NEW DATE: 9/30/2039
NEW: M-091-49B	Complete the retrieval and designation of RH RSW (includes the 200 Area caissons)	9/30/2048
M-091-54 (previously a target M-091-52-T02)	Submit to Ecology for approval in accordance with Action Plan section 7.2.3, an interim response action proposal to resume RSW retrieval.	OLD DATE: 09/30/2021 NEW DATE: 9/30/2028



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Facilities or capabilities to process (repackage and certify) waste: New facilities are needed for both contact-handled and remote-handled waste. These milestones require a conceptual design, permit modification, and engineering study for the facilities or capabilities.

Milestone	Description	Due Date
M-091-55 (previously a target M-091-52-T03)	Submit to Ecology a 30 percent Conceptual Design Report package for the Facility/Capability for CH waste containers.	OLD DATE: 9/30/2022 NEW DATE: 9/30/2024
NEW: M-091-56	Submit to Ecology a request to modify the Hanford Facility Dangerous Waste Permit to include the Facility and/or Capability for CH waste containers, based on the 90 percent final design report package.	9/30/2026
NEW: M-091-58	Submit to Ecology an engineering study of the impacts of radiological decay on the retrieval, processing, certification and shipment/disposal of all of the M-091 waste containers. This study shall identify impacts to cost and schedule of activities leading to shipment for disposal.	9/30/2024

Definitions:

MLLW: Radioactive waste that contains a hazardous (e.g., chemical) component and is disposed of on the Hanford Site. The hazardous components of mixed wastes are subject to RCRA or Washington State Dangerous Waste regulations.

TRUM Waste: TRU waste that contains a hazardous (e.g., chemical) component that is subject to RCRA or Washington State Dangerous Waste regulations. TRU waste is waste that meets the definition in Subsection (18) of Section 2 of the WIPP Land Withdrawal Act. Pub. L. 102-579. In the U.S., TRU waste is most often a byproduct of weapons production, nuclear research and power production, and consists of protective gear, tools, residue, debris and other items contaminated with small amounts of radioactive elements higher than uranium (92) on the periodic table (mainly plutonium).

Public Involvement

A 45-day public comment period on proposed changes to TPA milestones related to the management of Hanford's solid waste will run from April 26 through June 14 23, 2021. A virtual public meeting is scheduled for May 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. PT.

The draft proposed change package will be available online during the public comment period on the Hanford public involvement website at <https://go.usa.gov/xVmew>, in the Administrative Record at <https://go.usa.gov/xsykj>, and in the Hanford Public Information Repositories at <https://go.usa.gov/xVDTS>.

Please submit comments by June 14 23, 2021 to M-091@rl.gov (preferred) or in writing to:

Attn: Jennifer Colborn, HMIS
P.O. Box 450, H6-60
Richland, WA 99352

During the virtual meeting, you can view the presentation, hear the speakers and ask your questions. To participate via GoToWebinar, please follow the instructions below:

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2. Enter Conference ID: 1333#

Please contact Jennifer Colborn at Jennifer.M.Colborn@rl.gov or (509) 376-5840 for questions or to request disability accommodation. DOE makes every effort to honor disability accommodation requests.



Public Involvement Opportunity

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May 13, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. PT

