

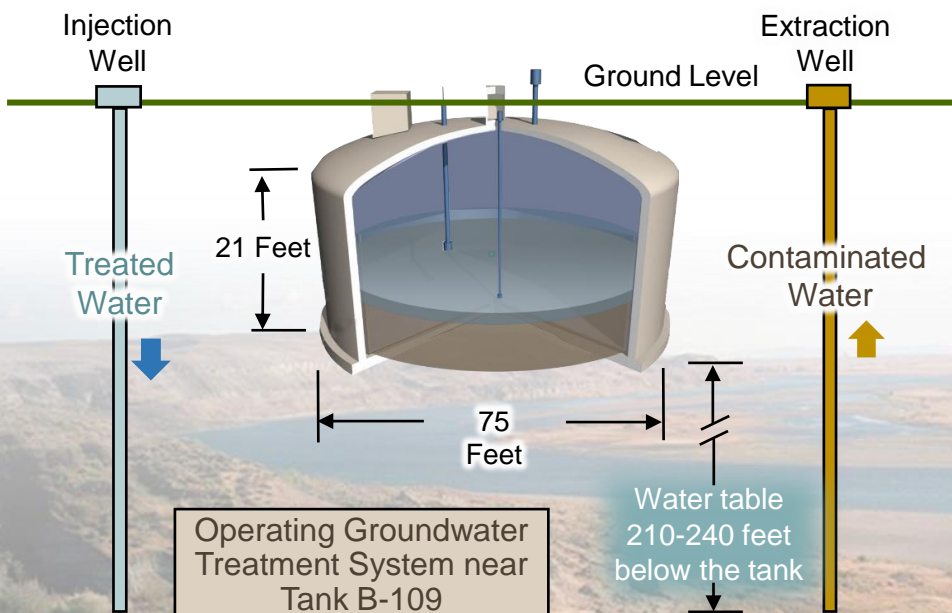
The Department of Energy (DOE) determined in April 2021 that underground storage tank B-109 is leaking waste into the surrounding soil; however, there is no increased health or safety risk to Hanford workers or the public.

Contamination in this area is not a new issue, and mitigation actions have been in place for years to protect workers, the public and the environment. Hanford has been following well-established tank integrity and risk reduction processes that include operating groundwater pump and treat systems below Tank B-109.

The systems were installed several years ago. They remove contaminants from past leaks from other nearby tanks and the discharge of 52 million gallons of contaminated liquids to the soils surrounding the tank storage area, known as B Tank Farm, during historical operations to produce materials for the U.S. nuclear weapons program.

Tank B-109 was previously emptied of pumpable liquids and holds about 123,000 gallons of waste, including about 13,000 gallons of residual liquid. DOE estimates the tank is leaking about 560 gallons per year and that it could take more than 25 years for any contamination to reach the water table, where it would be removed by the pump-and-treat systems.

In August 2022, DOE and the Washington State Department of Ecology signed an agreement, called an Agreed Order, on how to respond to leaking underground waste tanks, including Tank B-109, another tank reported as leaking in 2013, Tank T-111, and potential future leaks.



Tank B-109

Key Takeaways

- There is no increased risk to the Hanford Site workforce or the public from the tank leak.
- The tank was previously emptied of pumpable liquids and holds about 123,000 gallons of mostly solid waste, with about 13,000 of residual liquid.
- Contamination in this area is not new and mitigation actions have been in place for years.
- Existing groundwater treatment systems will capture and treat contamination that may reach groundwater.
- DOE continues to assess and explore other capabilities to reduce the release of contaminants from the tank, such as surface barriers.

