

ANNOUNCEMENT

Department of Energy
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To: ALL RL/ORP EMPLOYEES

Subject: UPDATE ON 324 BUILDING AND EXPECTED MEDIA COVERAGE

We wanted to let you know we expect media coverage today on our work in the 324 Building, including a Stop Work that occurred and safety controls that are in place to protect workers, and are providing this background for your information.

During drilling in a basement room inside the 324 Building in mid-March to install “micropiles” under the foundation of the B Cell, crews detected contamination in the room. The micropiles will strengthen the building’s foundation while remote equipment is used to excavate contaminated soil under the building through the B Cell floor. The contamination was detected after the drill rig had reached the contaminated soil under the building.

Because the potential to encounter contamination was considered during work planning, the area was posted and controlled, and the workers were wearing protective clothing and respiratory gear. Workers were not exposed and surveys outside the room where the drill was operated didn’t detect contamination.

Workers and project management followed safety protocols. They worked together to modify the drilling equipment and institute additional controls for contamination. Those modifications to the drilling equipment were completed, and following a two-week maintenance outage, drilling resumed yesterday.

Separately and unrelated to the mid-March occurrence, on March 28, surveys detected contamination on the pant leg of one worker who was in a radiologically-controlled area inside the building. In a commonly used practice, workers removed the contamination with a piece of tape. Facility surveys detected no additional contamination outside of controlled areas. March 28 was the last day of the work week; on April 1, management declared a Stop Work to adjust safety controls for the type of contamination found. Management lifted the stop work on April 4, once the enhanced controls were implemented.

I would like to thank the workers and project management for following safety protocols and working together to modify the equipment and safety controls. We will continue to take a conservative approach to contamination controls and safety to ensure our workforce is protected.

More information is available in this background information put together by the 324 Building project: <https://www.hanford.gov/files.cfm/Background324BuildingMay2019.pdf>.

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