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# THE HANFORD SITE

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## Analytical Lab Deemed Ready to Operate

**RICHLAND, Wash.** – The Department of Energy (DOE) and Bechtel National, Inc. (BNI) recently declared the Hanford Vit Plant's [Analytical Laboratory](#) "Ready to Operate" for transforming low-activity waste into an immobilized form safe for storage.

That's an official designation signifying that the facility and its team are prepared to support cold commissioning, during which a waste-like simulant is run through the plant to ensure systems are working properly under operating conditions. BNI is the prime contractor designing, building and commissioning the Vit Plant for DOE.

The Analytical Laboratory is key to DOE's [Direct-Feed Low-Activity Waste](#) approach that will be used to treat millions of gallons of low-activity waste from Hanford's underground tanks.

"This is another important step forward in preparing to treat tank waste," said Tom Fletcher, ORP assistant manager for the Vit Plant. "Our team continues to demonstrate that we have a deliberate process that ensures safety and quality through every step toward cold and hot commissioning."

The lab's ready-to-operate designation means that training and qualification processes are finished; programs and procedures are approved and implemented; and equipment, tools, and materials are in place, tested, and available for use by existing and future lab staff.

In preparation for the ready-to-operate assessment, the Vit Plant team completed a comprehensive set of 67 individual criteria that included readying the lab's structures, systems, components, programs, procedures, and staff. The assessment participants included internal staff as well as those from Bechtel's corporate offices and Hanford's [222-S Laboratory](#).

"This effort overcame many unforeseen challenges in 2020 and embodies the 'One Team' spirit we are proud of at the Vit Plant," said Gene Nemeth, deputy nuclear facility manager working for subcontractor Waste Treatment Completion Company. "It was a united effort with tremendous support from all organizations. Passing the assessment is a tribute to the team's significant effort and can-do attitude."

Then, the lab team will prepare for hot commissioning, when actual tank waste will be run through the plant to ensure systems are operating properly. In 2021, the Vit Plant plans to hire a total of 24 laboratory technicians and 20 radiological technicians to support lab activities and preparations.

DOE reviewed and validated the assessment that the lab met expectations for readiness to operate.

DFLAW is a system of interdependent projects and infrastructure improvements, managed and highly integrated as a program, that must operate together successfully to vitrify, or immobilize in glass, Hanford's low-activity tank waste.



*The Department of Energy (DOE) is engaged in one of the great public works of this century at the Hanford Site near Richland, Washington. Responsible for the federal government's cleanup of the legacy of more than 40 years of producing plutonium through the 1980s, DOE is transforming the site back into a 24/7 operations mode to treat tank waste from the production era. The DOE Office of River Protection (ORP) is responsible for the safe and efficient retrieval, treatment and disposal of the 56 million gallons of chemical and radioactive waste stored in Hanford's 177 underground tanks. The mission includes building and commissioning the world's largest radioactive waste treatment plant, which will immobilize the legacy tank waste through vitrification. The DOE Richland Operations Office is responsible for all remaining Hanford cleanup and is currently focused on stabilizing and demolishing former plutonium production structures, excavating and disposing of contaminated soil and waste, treating contaminated groundwater, and configuring Hanford Site infrastructure for the future, with an emphasis on supporting the tank waste mission. Hanford Site work is conducted by a federal and contractor workforce of approximately 11,000 personnel. Visit [www.hanford.gov](http://www.hanford.gov) for more information about the Hanford Site.*

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