

THE HANFORD SITE

For Immediate Release:
November 23, 2021

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Hanford Plant Completes Startup Testing

RICHLAND, Wash. – The [Hanford Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant](#) has completed all startup testing of components and systems associated with transforming low-activity tank waste into a safe form for disposal.

This accomplishment moves the plant fully into the commissioning phase where final steps are taken to prepare for vitrifying, or immobilizing in glass, radioactive and chemical waste as part of Hanford's Direct-Feed Low-Activity Waste (DFLAW) Program.

“It was a huge milestone for the startup team to transfer the final DFLAW systems to the care, custody and control of plant management,” said Valerie McCain, project director and senior vice president for [Bechtel](#) National, Inc., the prime contractor designing, building and commissioning the plant. “We are in the final phase of our preparations to start vitrifying waste.”

The [DFLAW](#) Program is a system of interdependent projects and infrastructure improvements, managed and highly integrated, that must operate together to vitrify the waste.

“With the completion of startup testing, we can focus on commissioning and establishing the operating culture necessary to safely begin a new era of operations at Hanford,” said Mat Irwin, Office of River Protection deputy assistant manager for the plant. “All contractors are driving toward 24/7 operations to ensure we can operate the plant successfully.”

During vitrification, waste is treated to remove radioactive cesium and solids and will be fed directly to the Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant's Low-Activity Waste Facility melters. The waste and glass-forming materials will be mixed, heated and poured into specially designed stainless-steel containers. The containers will be transported a short distance to the Site's [Integrated Disposal Facility](#) for disposal.

The plant facilities can be viewed using the self-guided [Hanford Virtual Tour](#).



Electrician Ralph Bisla conducts tests of the finishing line inside the Low-Activity Waste Facility at Hanford's Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant.

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 for more information about the Hanford Site.



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