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Training Goes "Rad" at Hanford Waste Treatment Plant

RICHLAND, Wash. –The word "rad" has finally arrived at the Hanford Vit Plant, and it's not for a 1980s throwback.

Instead, more than 450 workers at the plant will receive radiological, or "rad," worker training as the plant nears commissioning, when operators will run a nonradioactive waste simulant through the plant to ensure systems are working properly.

"Rad worker training is a constant across the rest of Hanford," said Mat Irwin, Department of Energy Environmental Management's Office of River Protection deputy assistant manager for the plant. "But it's new at the plant as facility construction is finished, [Analytical Laboratory](#) startup is complete, and startup testing for the [Low-Activity Waste Facility](#) and [Effluent Management Facility](#) is nearly complete. The team is well prepared to complete training prior to cold and hot commissioning."

During commissioning, workers will need to demonstrate proper rad safety performance as if the plant were treating radioactive waste from Hanford's large underground tanks. The required training will help personnel maintain knowledge and skills.

"We are preparing our employees to safely operate the plant and turn tank waste into glass," said Kelly Neal, deputy safety and health manager for Hanford subcontractor Waste Treatment Completion Company. "Starting the training early is important to make sure our team is ready for commissioning."

The addition of rad worker training signifies another important step toward commissioning and eventual operations for the [Direct-Feed Low-Activity Waste](#) process, a system of interdependent projects and infrastructure improvements, managed and highly integrated as a program, that must operate together to vitrify tank waste, which means to immobilize it within glass.

"The need for this training now demonstrates how close we are to commissioning," said Irwin. "It's exciting to begin seeing the permanent plant training programs being implemented."

The training began this month and is scheduled for completion by the fall. The training is required for anyone who might access radiological areas, work with radioactive materials, or operate radiation-generating devices. Training consists of classroom modules and a written exam, as well as an onsite session for recognizing signs, postings, and barricades, and entering and exiting radiological areas. More advanced training will be held for employees learning how to don and doff personal protective equipment for entering and exiting contamination areas.

View individual plant facilities and their interior spaces using a self-guided [Hanford Virtual Tour](#).



Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant Commissioning Technician Quirino Quiroga learns to don and doff personal protective equipment as part of radiological worker training. This training signifies another important step toward commissioning and eventual operations for the Direct-Feed Low-Activity Waste process.

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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