

THE HANFORD SITE

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Analytical Laboratory Staffing Up at Vit Plant

RICHLAND, Wash. – Bechtel National, Inc. (BNI) is hiring and training dozens of laboratory and radiological technicians at [Hanford's Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant](#) to prepare for cold commissioning, when operators will run a non-radioactive waste simulant through the plant to ensure systems are working properly.

The first class of 12 new laboratory technicians is in training. They join chemists hired last year and together will be responsible for analyzing approximately 3,000 samples of tank waste at the plant's [Analytical Laboratory](#) each year to support [Direct-Feed Low-Activity Waste](#) (DFLAW) operations. DFLAW is a system of interdependent projects and infrastructure improvements, managed and highly integrated as a program, that must operate together to vitrify, or immobilize within glass, Hanford tank waste.

"The waste in the tanks is very complex, and each batch of waste fed to the plant's [Low-Activity Waste Facility](#) must be sampled and analyzed to ensure the vitrified end product meets regulatory standards," said Mat Irwin, DOE Office of River Protection deputy assistant manager for the plant.

Fourteen lab spaces will be used to conduct analyses of the elements within the waste, as well as determine physical and chemical properties of waste. The results will determine the type and amount of glass-forming materials that will be mixed with batches of tank waste during vitrification. Samples will also be taken throughout the vitrification process to confirm the plant is producing high-quality glass.

Last month, DOE Office of Environmental Management and BNI declared the lab "[ready to operate](#)" after safely constructing and testing all systems in the laboratory. The class of 12 new technicians is the latest wave of new hires as the plant transitions to commissioning work prior to operations.

"We expect to have 45 staff working 24/7 shifts in the Analytical Laboratory when DFLAW operations begin," said Valerie McCain, Bechtel senior vice president and project director. "A second set of 12 lab technicians and 20 radiological technicians will be hired later this spring for commissioning and operations roles."

Individual spaces within the Analytical Laboratory can be viewed using a self-guided [Hanford Virtual Tour](#).



Bernice Bunker and Justin Korenkiewicz are two of approximately 50 laboratory and radiological technicians EM Office of River Protection contractor Bechtel National, Inc. plans to hire and train this year to prepare the Analytical Laboratory at Hanford's Waste Treatment and Immobilization Plant for cold commissioning.

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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