



U.S. Department of Energy
Carlsbad Field Office
Waste Isolation Pilot Plant
P.O. Box 3090
Carlsbad, New Mexico 88221

Media Contact:

Bradley Bugger
U.S. DOE Carlsbad Field Office
(575) 234-7309

www.wipp.energy.gov

WIPP UPDATES: March 12, 2014

Next Set of Bioassay Results Anticipated March 19

Preliminary fecal sample results for 17 personnel, announced earlier, indicated the presence of trace amounts of radioisotopes. Follow-up urine samples have all been negative and were sent to the Centers for Disease Control for independent analysis. All have been entered into the bioassay program and will undergo whole body counts to determine the presence of isotopes in the lungs. To date, about 135 personnel have been entered into the bioassay program, including those who have requested testing. The next set of bioassay data is anticipated March 19.

Continuous Air Monitor Installation

WIPP engineering will install a continuous air monitor (CAM) at Station B--where underground air is exhausted after passing through high efficiency air particulate (HEPA) filters—to allow for an immediate alarm in the Control Room and prompt notification to employees if protective actions are required. Installation is targeted for completion by the end of next week. Once the CAM is installed, personnel will begin returning to the WIPP Site.

As a precautionary measure, only essential personnel needed to maintain plant operations and security or tasked with recovery efforts have been working at the facility since February 16. Radiological control personnel have performed more than 1,000 radiological surveys on-site to verify work areas are safe.

A large number of employees continue to perform job duties or undergo training to complete job-specific qualifications at alternate work locations in Carlsbad.

Re-entry Preparations Underway

As part of re-entry plan inspections, the regulations require the inspection of the Salt Shaft and the Air Intake Shaft from the surface to the bottom (2150 Feet), which is scheduled for this weekend. Two independent safety inspectors from Red Path Mining are on-site to review re-entry activities.

Weekly Town Hall Meeting Scheduled for Thursday

Carlsbad Mayor Dale Janway and DOE will co-host weekly town hall meetings to update the community on recovery activities at WIPP. The meetings will be held every Thursday at 5:30 p.m. at the Carlsbad City Council Chambers, 101 N. Halagueno Street. If you can't attend, you can view the meeting on line at <http://new.livestream.com/rrv/wipptownhall>. [Click here](#) for video of the March 6 DOE WIPP Town Hall. The next meeting will be Thursday, March 13, and feature an update on recovery activities.