



A publication of the U.S. Department of Energy Carlsbad Field Office

January 2014

### WIPP Quick Facts

(As of 1-29-14)

**11,872**

Shipments received since opening  
(11,153 CH and 719 RH)

**90,807**

Cubic meters of waste disposed  
(container volume)  
(90,451 CH and 356 RH)

**170,946**

Containers disposed in the underground  
(170,219 CH and 727 RH)

\*CH - Contact-handled transuranic waste  
RH - Remote-handled transuranic waste

## WIPP Laboratories Receives 5th Consecutive DOELAP Accreditation



WIPP Laboratories perform daily testing and monitoring to assure and validate the radiological safety of WIPP.

The WIPP Laboratories (WIPP Labs), which operates out of the Carlsbad Environmental Monitoring and Research Center (CEMRC), was accredited by the DOE's Laboratory Accreditation Program (DOELAP) for the fifth consecutive time. The evaluation of DOELAP Accreditation is conducted every three years and for the past 15 years WIPP has continually maintained its accreditation.

"Receiving this accreditation is vital to WIPP's mission as it provides stakeholder assurance that our monitoring and analysis program accurately provides data ensuring the safety and health of the employees, the environment, and the community," said Mansour Akbarzadeh, Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC (NWP) manager of Science and Development and the WIPP Laboratories. "We could not achieve this excellence without the outstanding support provided by CBFO."

To receive accreditation, laboratories must demonstrate competence by meeting acceptance criteria on performance evaluation samples provided by DOE. Labs must also undergo and pass an extensive on-site audit.

WIPP Labs received the accreditation for conducting in vitro radiobioassay analysis – meaning it analyzes levels of radioactivity contained in urine and fecal samples. To date, all radiobioassay monitoring results of WIPP workers are either negative or at normal background levels. These results validate that the operation of WIPP is extremely safe and protective of workers.

"We are pleased with the performance of WIPP Labs and congratulate them for once again receiving this accreditation," said CBFO Office of Environment, Safety, and Health Director George Basabilvazo. "The successive receipt of this accreditation validates our program's continued

## WIPP Personnel Receive Awards From ESGR



Farok Sharif and Joe Franco receive New Mexico Patriotic Employers awards from Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve representatives.

commitment to the protection of our workers, the public, and the environment."

Steven Zobel, DOELAP Administrator, congratulated NWP for its successful participation in DOELAP and lauded the support of the Carlsbad Field Office in this program.

The Dosimetry group which operates under the NWP Environment, Safety and Health (ES&H) Department also received DOELAP accreditation for in vivo radiobioassay. This type of analysis is performed at CEMRC, a division of New Mexico State University's Institute for Energy and the Environment. In vivo radiobioassay analysis consists of whole body counting of WIPP employees and residents in the area. WIPP Labs is managed by NWP with the support staff from URS Professional Solutions (URS-PS) LLC, a URS subsidiary.

## CBFO's Casey Gadbury Shares WIPP Experience with Health Physics Society



Last month, CBFO's Site Operations Director Casey Gadbury was a keynote presenter for the Health Physics Society (HPS) – West Texas Chapter meeting in Hobbs, NM. During this presentation, Gadbury provided an overview of WIPP along with a current status report and recent key accomplishments.

"Providing regional groups and organizations with information about WIPP is important to maintaining the high level of support WIPP has received throughout the years," said Gadbury.

The message was well received with many favorable comments and questions about WIPP.

The HPS is a scientific organization of professionals who specialize in radiation safety. It was founded in 1956; however, the West Texas Chapter was only recently chartered in June 2010. This chapter's formation can be largely attributed to the nuclear growth in Southeastern New Mexico and West Texas.

## WIPP Maintenance Outage

## Safety Minute: Pedestrian and Driver Awareness Tips

Everyone is a pedestrian at some time, and most know to keep their distance from moving traffic. However, according to the findings from an August 2013 Department of Transportation study, "On average, a pedestrian is killed every two hours and injured every eight minutes in traffic crashes." (Traffic Safety Facts: Pedestrians, August, 2013)



Unfortunately, pedestrians and drivers do not obey laws and signals consistently and many often use cell phones and music players while walking or driving. Nearly 3 out of 4 pedestrian deaths occur in urban environments (73%), at non-intersections (70%), during the nighttime (70%), and many involve alcohol. More than a third (37%) of the pedestrians killed, and 1 in 8 (13%) of the drivers in pedestrian fatalities, had blood alcohol concentrations (BACs) of .08 g/dL or higher, the illegal limit in every State. Either the driver or pedestrian, or both, had some alcohol in 47% of all fatal pedestrian crashes.

There are several things we can do in our roles as drivers and pedestrians to experience greater pedestrian safety.

For Pedestrians:

- Walk on a sidewalk or path whenever they are available.
- If there is no sidewalk or path available, walk facing traffic (on the left side of the road) on the shoulder, as far away from traffic as possible. Keep alert at all times; don't be distracted by electronic devices, including radios, smart phones and other devices that take your eyes (and ears) off the road environment.
- Be cautious night and day when sharing the road with vehicles. Never assume a driver sees you (he or she could be distracted, under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs, or just not seeing you). Try to make eye contact with drivers as they approach you to make sure you are seen.
- Be predictable as a pedestrian. Cross streets at crosswalks or

## Scheduled to begin in February

Valentine's Day will bring with it some love to WIPP's infrastructure. Beginning February 14 through March 10, maintenance activities will be underway at WIPP as part of a scheduled maintenance outage. During this time, WIPP will not receive waste shipments, but instead will focus its efforts toward providing the critical maintenance that supports the safe and efficient operation of WIPP.

The primary maintenance events during this time include (1) replacing an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) in the support building, (2) replacing Head Rope #6 on the Waste Hoist and (3) replacing Tail Rope #2 on the Waste Hoist.

A UPS provides emergency power and protects electronic hardware from power interruptions. The UPS is especially important to WIPP's Central Monitoring Room.

The Waste Hoist at WIPP has six head ropes that connect to the top of the waste conveyance. Each steel rope is 1 3/8 inches in diameter and is made up of 151 interlocking strands of wire. One head rope measures about 2,300 feet in length and weighs about 11,500 pounds. Additionally, the Waste Hoist also has three tail ropes which are attached between the conveyance and counterweights.



WIPP personnel work on installing head ropes during 2013.

intersections whenever possible. This is where drivers expect pedestrians.

- If a crosswalk or intersection is not available, locate a well-lit area, wait for a gap in traffic that allows you enough time to cross safely, and continue to watch for traffic as you cross.
- Stay off of freeways, restricted-access highways and other pedestrian-prohibited roadways.
- Be visible at all times. Wear bright clothing during the day, and wear reflective materials or use a flash light at night.
- Avoid alcohol and drugs when walking; they impair your abilities and judgment too.

### For Drivers:

- Look out for pedestrians everywhere, at all times. Very often pedestrians are not walking where they should be.
- Be especially vigilant for pedestrians in hard-to-see conditions, such as nighttime or in bad weather.
- Slowdown and be prepared to stop when turning or otherwise entering a crosswalk.
- Always stop for pedestrians in crosswalks and stop well back from the crosswalk to give other vehicles an opportunity to see the crossing pedestrians so they can stop too.
- Never pass vehicles stopped at a crosswalk. They are stopped to allow pedestrians to cross the street.
- Never drive under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Follow the speed limit, especially around pedestrians.
- Follow slower speed limits in school zones and in neighborhoods where there are children present.



### The U.S. Department of Energy

Waste Isolation Pilot Plant

To be added to the TeamWorks update notification list or to submit comments or suggestions, please [click here](#) to send us an e-mail message.

To read past issues, visit the [Archives](#) page.



---

Hit Counter. Hit Counter.