



Westinghouse News

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For Immediate Release **WIPP to Provide Training For Hospital Personnel in Nevada**

CARLSBAD, N.M., January 15, 2001 – Radiation Management Consultants, Inc., (RMC) will host three separate hospital training sessions this week in the state of Nevada on behalf of the U.S. Department of Energy's (DOE) Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP).

RMC, based in Philadelphia, is contracted by the Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division to train hospital personnel in assessing and treating patients who may be contaminated with radioactive material.

Westinghouse is the management and operating contractor for DOE at WIPP.

The training is an ongoing cooperative effort by DOE's Carlsbad Field Office and states along the WIPP transportation corridors. The training will consist of one 8-hour session. It will be held January 16 at Sunrise Hospital in Las Vegas, January 17 at the Beatty Medical Clinic in Beatty and January 18 at the Amargosa Medical Clinic in Amargosa Valley.

The training is funded by DOE to provide medical personnel the necessary training in the event of an incident involving a shipment of transuranic waste to WIPP. It is highly unlikely, however, that radioactive contamination would occur in an incident of this nature due to the extraordinary safety of the WIPP transportation system and the TRUPACT-II waste shipping containers.

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The course, titled "Medical Management of Radiation Victims," is intended for doctors, nurses, technicians, paramedics, and emergency medical technicians. It is designed to provide information on the signs and symptoms of radiation injuries, methods of treatment, and decontamination of patients if necessary. The course will also address the proper procedures for protecting the hospital environment, as well as other patients who may be present in the hospital. To date, DOE has provided this training to 2,117 hospital personnel along WIPP transportation routes.

WIPP, a cornerstone of the DOE's cleanup effort, is designed to permanently dispose of defense-generated transuranic radioactive waste left from the research and production of nuclear weapons.

Located in southeastern New Mexico, 26 miles east of Carlsbad, project facilities include disposal rooms excavated in an ancient, stable salt formation 2,150 feet (almost one-half mile) underground. Waste disposal operations began at WIPP March 26, 1999.

Transuranic waste consists of clothing, tools, rags, debris, residues, and other disposable items contaminated with radioactive elements, mostly plutonium.

For more information about WIPP, call 1-800-336-9477, or visit the WIPP Web site at <http://www.wipp.carlsbad.nm.us>.