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No Damage to WIPP Cargo in Roswell Traffic Accident

CARLSBAD, N.M., July 24, 2004, 1:00 a.m. (MDT) – The U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) reported that a truck en route to the DOE's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) was involved in a traffic accident with a passenger vehicle at the intersection of U.S. 285 and U.S. 70 on the truck relief route west of Roswell.

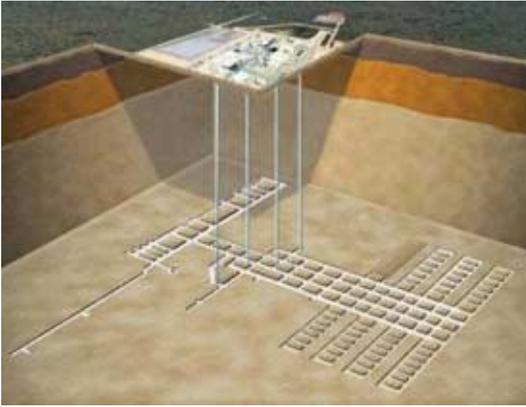
No injuries were reported by passengers in either vehicle. The extent of damage to the passenger vehicle is not known at this time. However, drivers of the WIPP truck reported only minor damage to the right front fender and wheel hub of the tractor. The trailer and its payload of three Transuranic Package Transporters (TRUPACT-IIs) waste containers were undamaged. No contamination was released to the environment.

Initial reports indicate that the driver of the passenger vehicle received a citation in conjunction with the accident.

The WIPP truck was driven to a nearby state police compound for a Commercial Vehicle Safety Alliance Level VI inspection – the most rigorous safety inspection in the trucking industry. Before the shipment was released to proceed at 1:20 a.m. Saturday, a New Mexico Department of Transportation inspector certified that it was safe and roadworthy. A replacement tractor was dispatched to complete the shipment to WIPP.

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The shipment was in transit from DOE's Rocky Flats Environmental Technology Site near Denver, Colo., when the accident occurred. Since opening in March 1999, WIPP trucks have traveled more than 5.7 million miles and safely delivered more than 2,800 shipments of transuranic waste to the WIPP.



WIPP is the nation's solution for cleaning up defense-generated transuranic waste located at DOE sites across the country. Operational since March 1999, WIPP has received more than 2,800 waste shipments; safely disposing more than 22,000 cubic meters of transuranic waste in the repository located nearly one-half mile underground.