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For Immediate Release

WIPP Employees Notified of Preliminary Sample Results

CARLSBAD, N.M., February 26, 2014 – Today, the Department of Energy's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) and Nuclear Waste Partnership LLC, (NWP) the WIPP contractor, notified 13 employees of positive preliminary bioassay results. The results are based on samples taken as a precautionary measure from employees present during the February 14, 2014 radiological event.

All employees present the night of the event were checked for any external contamination before being allowed to leave the site. As a precautionary measure, the site's Radiological Control Program also collected biological samples from each of these employees to check for possible exposure from inhaling airborne radioactive particles. Employees working at the site on February 15 are being offered bioassay analysis to ensure their health and safety.

Since the event, only essential personnel have been allowed access to the site. Upon leaving the site each individual is checked for any external contamination.

It is important to note that these are initial sample results. These employees, both federal and contractor, will be asked to provide additional samples in order to fully determine the extent of any exposure.

Please see link (http://www.wipp.energy.gov/special/cbfo_mgr_letter.pdf) to a letter from Joe Franco, Carlsbad Field Office Manager, to the Carlsbad community.

NWP is the management and operating contractor for WIPP, America's only operating deep geologic repository for the permanent disposal of defense-related transuranic nuclear waste, located 26 miles southeast of Carlsbad, N.M.